

FASCIST RULE IN ITALY

by

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INTRODUCTION

DURING the last decade the world has been faced by serious political and economic problems. Some countries have attempted to solve these problems by means of existing capitalistic and parliamentary machinery; others, notably Italy and Soviet Russia, have launched new programs which fundamentally challenge accepted institutions. Various aspects of Communism have been authoritatively treated in a number of recent studies. Today, when the Fascist government is in the ninth year of its existence, it may be useful to review its policies and achievements.

Nowhere in Europe were the doubts and disillusion engendered by the World War so sharply crystallized as in Italy, which regarded the Versailles settlement as a Pyrrhic victory. When war-weariness and revolution threatened to paralyze national life, the Fascist party undertook to terminate the parliamentary crisis and to solve the country's economic problems. This report is devoted to a study of the methods by which Fascism has molded the political situation since its advent to power. The economic and social program of Fascism will form the subject of a subsequent report.

The unification of Italy, begun with the revolutions of 1821 and 1848, has been effected under conditions of considerable difficulty. The Italian *Risorgimento*, which had rallied all liberal and patriotic elements under the leadership of Mazzini and Cavour, and had given intellectual impetus to the process of unification, was essentially

the movement of an *élite*. The Italian people as a whole, divided for centuries into semi-feudal principalities, oppressed by foreign rulers and absorbed in matters of local concern, had no sense of national unity, no knowledge of freedom and no experience with parliamentary institutions. "We have made Italy," said the statesman D'Azeglio in 1861, "now we must make Italians."

The country, poor in natural resources, was further weakened by a conflict of economic interests between the North, which had begun to develop its industries, and the agrarian South, whose progress was hampered, first by absentee landlordism, and later by the indifference of the central government. Italy, like Germany, discovered that it had emerged on the international scene too late to profit by colonial expansion, which seemed to offer the only outlet for a rapidly growing population. Conscious of a brilliant past, Italy found it difficult to accept a position which it regarded as that of a proletarian among nations.

The form of government adopted by the Kingdom of Italy in 1861 was the product not so much of Italy's political experience as of the cult for liberalism and democracy which then reigned in Western Europe. The *Statuto* granted by Charles Albert to Piedmont in 1848 became the constitution of the new kingdom. It provided for a monarch, and a Parliament consisting of a Chamber of Deputies, elected on a narrow franchise, and a Senate, the members of which were appointed by the King for life from among

twenty-one specified categories. Legislative power was to be exercised jointly by the King and the two chambers. All citizens were declared equal before the law. Individual liberty, inviolability of domicile and freedom of the press were fully guaranteed.

Parliamentary government, imposed from above at a time when a large majority of the population were illiterate, never became thoroughly acclimated in Italy's political life. The deputies, as in other countries, represented local rather than national interests, and were frequently out of touch with the broad masses of the population. The political leaders who succeeded Cavour—Minghetti, Depretis, Crispi, Giolitti—enjoyed a personal, more than a party following, and the formation of each new cabinet involved a considerable amount of intrigue and compromise. Elections, especially during Giolitti's several terms as Prime Minister, were accompanied by fraud and violence. The absence of political tradition and the diversity of the country's interests prevented the emergence of a single group which could be regarded as the ruling class.

ITALY'S POLITICAL LIFE, 1861-1914

During the fifty-three years which elapsed between the establishment of the kingdom and the outbreak of the World War, Italy was continuously governed by liberals, first of the Right, and after 1876, of the Left. The liberals achieved a considerable measure of success in creating national unity and in solving Italy's most pressing economic problems. The Socialist party, organized in the early nineties, began to participate in parliamentary work at the beginning of the present century, and obtained a series of important social reforms, including the electoral law of 1912, which increased the number of voters from over three million to more than eight and a half million. Socialism, which drew its chief support from the small bourgeoisie (*piccola borghesia*) and the intellectuals, was weakened in 1912 by a cleavage between its moderate and radical elements. The former seceded under the reformist Bissolati, while the latter remained within the party, and attempted to find a

remedy for the growing social unrest in the ranks of the proletariat. Meanwhile, the Nationalist party, formed in 1910, advocated a policy of expansion and imperialism.¹ The country's renewed interest in colonial questions found practical expression in the Italo-Turkish war of 1911-1912, as a result of which Italy obtained Tripoli and Cyrenaica.²

ITALY AND THE WORLD WAR

At the outbreak of the World War, the Italian government decided that it was not bound by the Triple Alliance to join the Central Powers in a war which it regarded as one of offense, and made a declaration of neutrality. Public opinion, however, was divided. The Nationalists demanded, while the Socialists opposed, Italy's entrance into the war. The Prime Minister, Salandra, stated that the country's policy would be dictated by "sacred egoism." After some hesitation, Benito Mussolini, an extreme Socialist and the editor of the party organ, *Avanti*, suddenly pronounced himself in favor of intervention on the side of the Allies.³ Expelled from the party, he founded his own newspaper, *Il Popolo d'Italia*, in Milan, where he was followed by the more revolutionary Socialist elements. Mussolini welcomed the war as a prelude to revolution. In 1915 he organized his followers in *Fasci d'Azione Rivoluzionaria*, and instructed them to be ready for everything—"for the trenches as well as for the barricades"⁴ When Italy finally entered the war in May 1915, he greeted the event as a triumph of popular sentiment over a cautious government.⁵

During the war, in which he participated as a private, Mussolini denounced the defeatism of the Socialists, and advocated the use of force for its suppression. He favored centralization of power in the hands of the government, as well as restrictions on the freedom of speech and of the press. The

1. The leaders of the Nationalist party—Enrico Corradini, Luigi Federzoni, Roberto Forges-D'Avanzati—are now prominent in Fascist circles.

2. For the history of Italy, 1859-1915, cf. Benedetto Croce, *A History of Italy, 1871-1915* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1929); F. Quintavalle, *Storia dell' Unità Italiana* (Milan, Hoepli, 1926); Luigi Villari, *Italy* (London, Benn, 1929); G. Volpe, *L'Italia in Cammino* (Milan, Treves, 1927).

3. For Mussolini's earlier years, cf. Benito Mussolini, *My Autobiography* (New York, Scribner's, 1928); Margherita Sarfatti, *Dux* (Milan, Mondadori, 1926).

4. Mussolini, *Diuturna* (Milan, Imperia, 1924), p. 15.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 52.

defeat which the Italian army suffered at Caporetto in October 1917 aroused both the government and the country, and a fresh drive against the enemy resulted in 1918 in the victory of Vittorio Veneto. Mussolini exulted at the breakdown of the Central Powers: Italy, he said, would now enjoy a new springtime, a new *risorgimento*, and would at last obtain its appointed place in the sun.

The hopes of Mussolini and his followers were dealt a severe blow by the wave of war-weariness which swept over the country in 1919, and by the results of the Paris Peace Conference which, in their opinion, left Italy with a "mutilated victory." The army, returning from the front to reap the reward of its sacrifices, found that the more profitable posts had meanwhile been occupied by those who had stayed safely at home. The cost of living had risen considerably, with no corresponding adjustment of salaries. The lower bourgeoisie, the civil employees and the intellectuals, many of whom were faced by unemployment, were in a worse economic plight than the peasants and industrial workers. The country was seething with disillusion and discontent.

GROWTH OF SOCIALISM AFTER THE WAR

The Socialists, who had bitterly opposed Italy's participation in the war, now openly assailed the government for its failure to keep the country out of the conflict, and attacked officers and soldiers who ventured to appear publicly in uniform. Impressed with the success of the Soviet government, the Socialists advocated revolution by violent means as the only solution of Italy's problems. In the elections of 1919, held on the basis of proportional representation, the Socialists won an outstanding victory, returning 157 candidates to the Chamber of Deputies, and capturing the government in over two thousand municipalities. This success, however, marked the high tide of Italian Socialism. Strikes and disorders inspired by Socialists reached a climax in September 1920, when workers occupied the metallurgical factories of Lombardy and Piedmont. Neither the government nor the industrialists offered any resistance, and the workers, find-

ing that they could not operate the factories without capital or technical experts, evacuated them after a few days. The revolutionary leaders suffered a loss of prestige. The Socialist party was further weakened in 1921 by the secession of its Left wing elements, which formed the Maximalist Communist party.⁶

ORGANIZATION OF FASCIST GROUPS

Meanwhile, two new political groups were attracting those opposed to the Socialist program. The *non-expedit*, by which the Church in 1867 had advised Catholics to abstain from political activities, was permitted to lapse in 1919, when a priest, Don Luigi Sturzo, organized the Popular party, with a democratic program "inspired by Christian ethics." On March 23, 1919 Mussolini formed the first *Fascio di Combattimento*, modeled on the earlier *Fasci d'Azione Rivoluzionaria*.⁷ These *fasci* were to devote their efforts to the restoration of public order and the suppression of Socialism. Fascism recruited its early adherents from the Nationalist party and from the ranks of the bourgeoisie, especially among World War veterans. Its program at that time was "a little of everything," combining democratic, republican, nationalist, monarchist and anarchist ideas,⁸ tinged with a romantic idealization of Italy's destiny. The Fascists were entirely ineffective in the elections of 1919, when Mussolini himself was defeated at the polls.

In the autumn of 1920, however, Mussolini and other local leaders formed armed bands of Fascists (*squadre*), which carried on a vigorous campaign against Socialists and Communists. The propertied classes—landowners and industrialists—irritated and alarmed by constant disturbances of public order, gradually turned to Fascism. In the elections of 1921, thirty-five Fascist candidates, including Mussolini, were elected to the Chamber of Deputies, chiefly on the Na-

6. Ivanoe Bonomi, *Dal Socialismo al Fascismo* (Rome, Formiggini, 1924).

7. Luigi Sturzo, *Italy and Fascism* (London, Faber and Gwyer, 1926).

8. Dino Grandi, *Il Fascismo* (Rome, Licio Capelli, 1922), p. 52. The name *fascio* is taken from the word *fascēs*—the Roman symbol of the lictor's power, which consisted of rods bound about an ax; it was borne in public processions before consuls and magistrates, and signified the union of all powers in one.

9. *Ibid.*, p. 61.

tionalist ticket. Once in Parliament, Mussolini broke with the Nationalists, declared himself to be anti-monarchical and republican, and in August 1921 concluded a "pact of pacification" with the Socialists. Neither of the two groups, however, succeeded in persuading the rank and file of its followers to abstain from acts of violence. The Fascists outside Parliament finally prevailed upon Mussolini to abandon his program of cooperation with other parliamentary groups.

Thereafter, the National Fascist party, formed on November 6, 1921, engaged in a bitter struggle with both Socialists and Popularists. On both sides hostilities were marked by extreme violence. The government was not sufficiently strong to restore order, and gave the Fascists a free hand, hoping to find in them an ally against Socialism. "Such conduct on the part of the government," says the Fascist historian Villari, "would have been wholly reprehensible in an orderly society, but Italy in 1919-1922 was nothing of the kind."¹⁰

THE "MARCH ON ROME"

A number of observers believe that by 1921 Socialism was in retreat, and that the threat of a Bolshevik revolution had practically disappeared.¹¹ The economic crisis had passed. The parliamentary crisis, however, showed no signs of improvement. Successive Prime Ministers, summoned from the ranks of Liberals, Socialists and Popularists, failed to rally the Parliament and the country to a national program directed at the solution of the country's pressing economic problems. In the summer of 1922 the Fascists were offered subordinate positions in the cabinet. Mussolini refused, saying that he would not "reach power through the service entrance," or sacrifice his ideals "for a miserable dish of ministerial lentils."¹² At the party congress held in Naples on October 24, 1922 Mussolini made a *volte face*, and declared his allegiance to the King. This declaration won him the sympathies of many sections of the population, notably the army, which had previously been repelled by his

republican principles. The Fascists, efficiently organized as a militia, and armed with the connivance of the government, were ready and eager for action. In October they occupied the large cities, taking possession of city halls, railway stations and postoffices. On October 27 the Fascist militia assembled at Civitavecchia, north of Rome, under the leadership of a "quadrumvirate"—General De Bono, De Vecchi, Michele Bianchi and Italo Balbo—and began the famous "March on Rome." The following day the militia entered the capital, where it met with no resistance.^{12a} On October 29 the King summoned Mussolini, who had remained in Milan, to form a cabinet, which he did on October 30. The Fascist revolution had taken place.

Opinion differs widely regarding the necessity of a revolution in 1922. Opponents of Fascism claim that the country had entered on a period of convalescence in 1921, and that the number of strikes had decreased in spite of a reduction in salaries.¹³ They believe, moreover, that the post-war parliamentary crisis was not indicative of the decadence of democracy in Italy, and that it could have been overcome by peaceful means if both Fascism and Socialism had transferred their struggle to the constitutional sphere.¹⁴ Mussolini, however, asserts that the legal transformation of the state by means of elections under a new electoral law, which he had suggested before the March on Rome, had been blocked by the government on the ground that it would disturb public order; the problem had become, therefore, "one of force."¹⁵ Parliamentary government, in his opinion, had been reduced to impotence after the war. He declares that the Fascist revolution was directed not against the constitutional organization of the state, but against the political group which for four years had failed to give a government to the country.

12a. On October 28 the cabinet, headed by Prime Minister Facta, decided to proclaim martial law and to oppose the March on Rome. On the advice of army leaders the King refused to sign the decree proclaiming martial law. Cf. Count Carlo Sforza, *Makers of Modern Europe* (Bobbs Merrill Company, 1930), Chapter XXXI, "Facta, or the Immediate Origins of Fascism."

13. Bonomi, *Dal Socialismo al Fascismo*, cited, p. 89 et seq. Bonomi estimates that 79,296 agricultural workers went on strike in 1921, as compared with 1,045,732 in 1920, and 644,564 industrial workers, as compared with 1,267,667 in 1920.

14. *Ibid.*; cf. also Guglielmo Ferrero, *Four Years of Fascism* (London, King & Son, 1924).

15. Cf. Mussolini's speech at the Fascist party congress in Naples, October 24, 1922. Mussolini, *Discorsi della Rivoluzione*, cited, p. 78.

10. Luigi Villari, *The Fascist Experiment* (London, Faber and Gwyer, 1928), p. 39.

11. Bonomi, *Dal Socialismo al Fascismo*, cited, p. 147; Villari, *The Fascist Experiment*, cited, p. 38; Gaetano Salvemini, *The Fascist Dictatorship in Italy* (New York, Holt, 1927).

12. Mussolini, *Discorsi della Rivoluzione* (Milan, Imperia, 1923), p. 77.

The policies and acts of the Fascist government have likewise given rise to diverse interpretations. The Fascist revolution, effected by a former Socialist who had held anti-bourgeois, anti-clerical and anti-royalist views, has been denounced as the triumph of a "White Guard" of industrial and agrarian capitalists,¹⁶ later supported by the Catholic Church. The Fascist government has been attacked at one and the same time

for reaction in politics and radicalism in the economic field. The Fascists, for their part, claim that they have created the only political and economic structure which can assure Italy's orderly development, as well as its progress in world affairs. No general conclusions regarding the character of the Fascist state can be reached until the theory of Fascism has been examined, and its practical application carefully analyzed.

THE THEORY OF FASCISM

Fascism traces its intellectual origins to Machiavelli's *The Prince*, through Georges Sorel, Hegel, Nietzsche and Vico. From Machiavelli it has learned that the preservation of the state justifies recourse to force, and that politics are distinct from ethics. In the syndicalism of Sorel it finds intuition and passion exalted above reason, and direct action advocated even when it involves violence. To Hegel it owes the conception of the state as a mystical entity, superior to individuals, who find realization only in acceptance of the law. Vico's theory that political institutions are not immutable, but undergo transformation in accordance with time and place, has proved of practical value in Fascist politics. The thinker who has been acclaimed as the prophet of Fascism, however, is the Italian economist, Vilfredo Pareto,¹⁷ whose lectures at the University of Lausanne Mussolini attended during his sojourn in Switzerland in 1902. Pareto believes that no social cycle can last indefinitely, and that the cycle of "demagogic plutocracy," which he identifies with the nineteenth century, may disappear when new elements arise, armed with knowledge, force and will-power. No form of government, in his opinion, is superior to any other in an abstract sense; the test of a "good" government is whether or not it is adapted to the society in which it is established. The governing class—the *élite*—must rely on both force and consent if it is to remain in power. Pareto

lived to see the advent of Fascism, some aspects of which, notably its restrictions on the freedom of the press, he subjected to searching criticism.

LACK OF PROGRAM

Fascism takes pride in the fact that it has no program. To those who accused him of vagueness, Mussolini replied in 1922 that Italy lacked, not programs, but men and will-power.¹⁸ Fascist writers declare that Fascism is, above all, action and sentiment.¹⁹ "Fascism as an idea is indefinable. It is a fact which is taking place."²⁰ In its emphasis on facts rather than theory, Fascism represents a revolt against positivism, which permeated Italian education before the war, and against all social philosophy based solely on speculation. Fascist leaders, the greater part of whose life has been spent in conflict, either at the front or in the field of politics, place more reliance on action than on intellect. "Every time we have taken up a volume," says Turati, former Secretary-General of the party, "there has resounded in our ears the cry of alarm, the sound of the trumpet, and we have had to fling away our book and take hold of the rifle."²¹

Fascism, however, chooses to be symbolized by the book as well as the rifle (*libro e moschetto*). It is not merely action; it has a theory. This theory is essentially in conflict with the historical materialism of Marx, which conceives of history as a predetermined class struggle inevitably resulting in

16. Francesco Nitti, *Bolchevisme, Fascisme et Démocratie* (Paris, "Progrès Civique," 1926).

17. Vilfredo Pareto (1848-1923), *Traité de Sociologie Générale* (Paris, Payot, 1921, 2 vols.); *Trasformazione della Democrazia* (Milan, "Corbaccio," 1921). Cf. G. H. Bousquet, *Vilfredo Pareto: Sa Vie et son Oeuvre* (Paris, Payot, 1928). "Fascism may to a large extent be regarded as an experimental proof of the doctrine [of Pareto]." Sergio Panunzio, *Che Cos'è il Fascismo* (Milan, Alpes, 1924), p. 77. For Pareto's influence on Mussolini, cf. Sarfatti, *Dux*, cited, p. 69. The futurist poet, Marinetti, is also regarded as a precursor of Fascism. Marinetti's influence on Italian art and literature will be discussed in a forthcoming *Foreign Policy Report*.

18. Mussolini, *Discorsi della Rivoluzione*, cited, p. 27.

19. Alfredo Rocco, *The Political Doctrine of Fascism*, Address delivered at Perugia, August 30, 1925, published in Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, *International Conciliation*, October 1926, No. 223, p. 394.

20. Panunzio, *Che Cos'è il Fascismo*, cited, p. 75.

21. Augusto Turati, *A Revolution and its Leader* (London, Alexander Ousley, 1930), p. 40.

the collapse of capitalism. Political and economic factors, according to Fascism, are neither predetermined nor eternal, but mobile and subject to change in different historical environments. Nor are the state or the individual concerned solely with material ends. Society is profoundly influenced by such spiritual factors as culture, religion, custom and tradition, and strives to preserve them for future generations.

FASCIST SLOGANS:

AUTHORITY, ORDER, DISCIPLINE

Unlike Marxism, Fascism holds out no promise of a millenium.²² It offers, however, the prospect of an ordered and disciplined existence within the framework of the state. The Fascist state is conceived not as an aggregate of groups and individuals, but as a spiritual entity which survives and transcends successive generations. "For Fascism, society has historical and immanent ends of preservation, expansion, improvement, quite distinct from those of the individuals which at a given moment compose it; so distinct in fact that they may even be in opposition."²³ Individuals are merely the means by which society achieves its ends. When it is objected that such worship of the state is nothing less than a new form of idolatry, Fascist writers reply that it constitutes a "religion of the spirit," which saves the mind from "the abject blindness of materialism."²⁴

The individual, according to Fascism, is subordinated to society, but not eliminated. He remains an element of society "however transient and insignificant he may be."²⁵ The individual, however, cannot lead an existence distinct from that of the state. He owes a duty to the state, and in the exercise of this duty may be called on to sacrifice everything, including life. The pre-eminence of duty is regarded as the highest ethical value of Fascism. The Fascist state is not merely an administrative organization, concerned with political or economic issues; it is "totalitarian," embraces all interests and activities, whether of groups or individuals, and permeates the spiritual content of life. Noth-

ing can exist outside or above the state. "One cannot be Fascist in politics . . . and non-Fascist in school, non-Fascist in the family circle, non-Fascist in the workshop."²⁶

Where Fascism departs most radically from the accepted doctrines of liberalism, socialism and democracy is in its conception of the liberty of individuals and groups. Individual rights are recognized by Fascism only in so far as they are implied in the rights of the state.²⁷ The conditions that make for the free development of the individual are to be safeguarded. Fascism, however, does not accept a bill of rights "which tends to make the individual superior to the state" and empowers him "to act in opposition to society."²⁸ Freedom, whether political or economic, is a concession on the part of the state, and can be granted only on condition that it be exercised in the interest of society as a whole and within the limits set by social exigencies. Fascism recognizes that individual ambition is "the most effective means of obtaining the best social results with the least effort," and regards a degree of economic liberty compatible with the social good. This liberty, however, must be severely curbed whenever it threatens to result in economic conflict and disturbance of public order. Measures of class self-defense, such as strikes and lock-outs, are therefore prohibited by Fascism. Economic justice is to be achieved, not in consequence of class struggle, but by means of Fascist syndicates subject to the authority of the state.²⁹ It is particularly important, according to Fascism, that peace should be preserved in a country like Italy, which is poor in natural resources.

"Public order must not be disturbed for any motive, at any cost. Italy must have economic peace in order to develop its resources. . . . It is necessary for syndicalism and capitalism to realize the new historical reality: that they must avoid bringing matters to the breaking-point, must avoid war between classes, because when such a war is fought within the nation, it is destructive. . . . The government is at the orders of neither group. The government stands above all groups in that it represents not only the political consciousness of the nation today, but

22. "We shall promise nothing special. We shall not assume the appearance of missionaries who are the bearers of revealed truth." Mussolini, *Discorsi della Rivoluzione*, cited, p. 61.

23. Rocco, *The Political Doctrine of Fascism*, cited, p. 402.

24. Giovanni Gentile, *Che Cos'è il Fascismo* (Florence, Vailanti, 1925), p. 36.

25. Rocco, *The Political Doctrine of Fascism*, cited, p. 402.

26. Gentile, *Che Cos'è il Fascismo*, cited, p. 33.

27. Rocco, *The Political Doctrine of Fascism*, cited, p. 403.

28. *Ibid.*, p. 403.

29. *Ibid.*, p. 406-407.

also all that the nation will constitute in the future."³⁰

THE INDIVIDUAL AND THE FASCIST STATE

The subordination of classes and individuals to the state creates no ethical problem for Fascism, which believes that "the legitimate will of the citizen is that which coincides with the will of the state."³¹ If this be true, opposition is not only unreasonable, but reprehensible. Should opposition nevertheless appear, it must be regarded as a social disease, to be eradicated as promptly as possible from the body politic. The method advocated in such cases is that of violence. "Discipline must be accepted," says Mussolini. "When it is not accepted, it must be imposed."³² Fascist theory distinguishes between private violence, which is arbitrary and anarchic, and violence directed to social ends. The latter is "willed by God and by all men who believe in God and in the order and laws which God certainly desires for the world. . . ."³³ Such violence is holy and highly moral.³⁴

The form of government advocated by Fascism differs fundamentally from that sponsored by liberal and democratic thinkers. Fascism rejects the conception of popular sovereignty.³⁵ Parliament and other institutions established to give expression to the popular will are regarded not only as useless, but as a grave obstacle to efficient administration. Democracy, which may have had meaning in the nineteenth century, has no place in the modern state, with its multiplicity and variety of functions. Sovereignty resides, not in the people, but in society juridically organized as a state. The great mass of citizens is too ignorant and too concerned with private interests to undertake the difficult task of government. This task, in Fascist theory, devolves on "the chosen

few," an *élite* selected for their peculiar gifts. In practice, this governing class (*classe dirigente*) is recruited from among men noted for their loyalty to the Fascist party. "Fascism and the Fascist governing class are born together."³⁶ Presumably, until Italy has been thoroughly "fascitized," the range of choice for positions of responsibility will remain comparatively limited.

The governing class, in turn, must be led and animated by a man who can give expression to its ideals. Fascism has found such a leader in Mussolini, who has become the object of a sentiment closely akin to divinization. Mussolini's energy, personal magnetism and political success have won admiration even outside the immediate circle of his supporters, with the result that, for many Italians, he has come to personify the spirit of a new Renaissance. Mussolini himself has frequently expressed the conviction that he is a "man of destiny," whose fate it is to guide Italy to a brilliant future.³⁷

The injection of a new spirit into national life is regarded by Fascism as one of its major accomplishments. "Our battle," says Mussolini, "was directed primarily against a state of mind, a mentality of renunciation, a spirit always more ready to avoid than to accept responsibility."³⁸ Fascism claims to have replaced the pessimism and discouragement of the post-war years by confidence in Italy's future, and to have substituted direct action for political apathy and confusion. The Fascist conception of the state as a mystical source of authority, and its recognition of religion as a necessary element in modern society, challenge the "agnosticism" of the liberal, anti-clerical state, committed to a policy of *laissez-faire*. To the individual weary of skepticism and materialism, Fascism offers a philosophy which prescribes discipline and acquiescence, yet emphasizes the romantic elements of national tradition.

30. Mussolini, *La Nuova Politica dell' Italia* (Milan, Imperia, 1924), Vol. II, p. 136-139.

31. Gentile, *Che Cos'è il Fascismo*, cited, p. 34.

32. Mussolini, *Discorsi della Rivoluzione*, cited, p. 17.

33. Gentile, *Che Cos'è il Fascismo*, cited, p. 31.

34. *Ibid.*, p. 31. Cf. also Mussolini, *Discorsi della Rivoluzione*, cited, p. 19: "Violence is not immoral. Violence is sometimes moral. . . . When our violence is a solution of a cancerous situation, it is highly moral, sacrosanct and necessary."

35. Mussolini, *Discorsi della Rivoluzione*, cited, p. 21: "You know that I do not adore that new divinity, the masses. It is a creation of democracy and socialism. Only because they are many they must be right. Nothing of the kind. The opposite is true, that numbers are contrary to reason."

36. Roberto Cantalupo, *La Classe Dirigente* (Milan, Biblioteca di Cultura Politica, 1926).

37. Cf. Mussolini, *Discorsi del 1925* (Milan, Alpes, 1926). "Every great movement must have a representative man who suffers all the passion of that movement and carries its flame within him." Cf. Pietro Gorgolini, *La Rivoluzione Fascista* (Turin, Silvestrelli and Cappellato, 1923), who extols Mussolini as the "Man" called on by destiny to rescue Italy from the old political régime.

38. Mussolini, *La Nuova Politica dell' Italia*, cited, Vol. II, p. 52.

FASCISM AND ITALIAN YOUTH

Fascism has found its most ardent adherents among World War veterans, especially those who had entered the war while still in their youth. These soldiers, many of whom had not yet come in contact with democratic institutions, spent their most impressionable years at the front, and there learned the value of direct action, discipline and submission to authority. They became, moreover, imbued with the desire to reap the fruits of victory. Fascism offered an avenue of escape from post-war weariness and disillusionment, as well as an instrument for the realization of nationalistic aspirations. They turned to Fascism as to a "springtime of the nation," and from them Fascism acquired both the defects and qualities of youth—self-confidence, violence, defiance of opposition, as well as spontaneity, buoyancy and a sense of adventure.³⁹ The predominance of youth in Fascist ranks explains a number of phenomena, such as hero-worship of Mussolini, glorification of virility, emphasis on sport and physical education, and the juvenile punishments meted out to opponents, notably administrations of castor oil. The Fascist anthem, *Giovinezza*, originally a song of the *Arditi*,⁴⁰ extols youth in the same breath with Fascism.

*Giovinezza, Giovinezza,
Primavera di bellezza.
Nel fascismo è la salvezza
Della nostra libertà.*⁴¹

The youthful energy released by Fascism has been directed not only to the development of Italy's resources, but to expansion of the national boundaries as well. The rapidly growing population cannot be adequately supported within the country's present boundaries, while emigration is regarded as an unsatisfactory solution, since it deprives Italy of both man-power and financial resources. Fascist Italy, therefore, seeks new worlds to conquer, and finds precedent and inspiration in the history of imperial Rome. The glorious past is constantly invoked, and many Fascist customs and institutions are modeled on those of the Roman

Empire. The urge to expand, which sprang originally from economic necessity, has been consecrated by exaltation of the nation's spiritual heritage. This tendency has found literary expression in the work of the poet Gabriele d'Annunzio, who led the Fiume expedition in 1920.

THE FASCIST PARTY

The National Fascist party was officially organized at a congress held in Rome on November 6, 1921. The program adopted at the congress stated that the party was "a voluntary militia placed at the service of the nation," which based its activities on three fundamental principles—"order, discipline, hierarchy." It is estimated that at that time the party numbered 151,644 members, and included merchants, manufacturers, professional men, government employees, teachers, students, landowners and agricultural workers.⁴² Many of the members had joined Fascism for personal ends, and were little concerned with its ideals. Mussolini frequently has deplored the original composition of the party. The Fascist revolution, he said in 1924, had been effected by a party hastily formed at a time when rigid selection presented practical difficulties. To his opponents, who accuse Fascism of violence and illegal acts, Mussolini answers that the revolution had thrown together "the good and the bad, the ascetics and the men eager for lucre, idealists and profiteers."⁴³ "The one weak point about the new régime," says the Fascist writer Villari, "was that not all the persons surrounding Mussolini were up to his own standard, either intellectually or morally. . . . In the case of Fascism, moreover, as it was a movement essentially of young men, there was also a lack of experience and other faults of youth."⁴⁴

Opponents of Fascism charge members of the party with a series of outrages following the March on Rome, such as floggings, forcible administrations of castor oil, illegal seizure of newspapers, wreckage of private houses and offices, and a number of murders. They claim that these outrages went unpunished, for the most part, due both to the

39. Cf. Robert Michels, *Socialismus und Fascismus in Italien* (Munich, Meyer and Jessen, 1925), p. 313; Herbert W. Schneider, *Making the Fascist State* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1928), p. 350-351.

40. Italian shock troops during the World War.

41. "Youth, youth, springtime of beauty, Fascism is the safeguard of our liberty."

42. Cf. Odon Por, *Fascism* (London, Labour Publishing Company, 1923), p. 122.

43. Mussolini, *La Nuova Politica*, cited, Vol. III, p. 180-181.

44. Villari, *The Fascist Experiment*, cited, p. 63.

connivance of the police and to the fact that the cases were invariably tried by Fascist judges and juries. Moreover, it is asserted that a number of Fascist offenses were wiped out by the amnesty granted on December 22, 1922, which covered all crimes committed for a "national end," and by subsequent amnesties.⁴⁵ The Fascist government denies that members of the party have engaged in illegal activities, except in some isolated instances, and claims that every effort has been made to remove such offenders from the ranks of the party.

Functions of the Party

The functions of the party were defined by its supreme organ, the Grand Council,⁴⁶ in a statute adopted in 1926 and amended in 1929.⁴⁷ It reaffirms the principle that the party is a civil militia at the service of the state, whose object is "to achieve the greatness of the Italian people." Fascism, it declares, is not merely a political program; it is, above all, a faith, professed and translated into action by its militant followers, the new Italians. The party is an essential factor in the organization of the state, and is indispensable to the existence of the régime.

The nucleus of the party is the *fascio di combattimento*, the local party organization, which must rally all Italians distinguished for the Fascist virtues of "loyalty, honesty, courage and intellect." The *fasci* are organized in provincial federations, which are subject to the authority of the National Directorate and the Grand Council; the latter determines the program of action which is to be followed by the party in all fields of national life. The members of the party are subject to a hierarchy (*gerarchia*) of local, provincial and national secretaries, acting under the supreme command of the leader—*Il Duce*—the title given to Mussolini. The Secretary-General of the party is appointed for three years by the King on proposal of the head of the government; he acts as secretary of the Grand Council and may be invited to participate in the work of the

Council of Ministers. Roberto Farinacci, appointed Secretary-General of the party in December 1925, at the height of anti-Fascist agitation, pursued a policy of violence and intransigence against those suspected of opposition to the government. He was replaced in 1926 by Augusto Turati, who inaugurated a milder policy. Following Turati's resignation in 1930, Giovanni Giuriati, president of the Chamber of Deputies, was appointed to that office.

In 1926 the Grand Council decided to admit no one to the party except those who "graduate" from the Advance Guard (*Avanguardisti*), the Fascist organization of young boys. On March 4, 1931 it voted to admit no fresh elements to the party until 1932.⁴⁸ The Fascist badge (*tessera*) is given to new Fascists only after careful scrutiny of their antecedents and qualifications. The party statute, as amended in 1929, provides that persons admitted to the party must take the following oath: "I swear to follow without discussion the orders of *Il Duce*, and to serve the cause of the Fascist revolution with all my strength and, if necessary, with my blood." A disciplinary court under the presidency of the Secretary-General of the party examines all cases in which members fail to exhibit the prescribed Fascist virtues. Offenders may be warned, admonished, suspended and, in the gravest cases, expelled from the party.

Composition of the Party

In 1930 the total membership of the party was estimated at 9,857,036, of whom over one million were enrolled in *fasci* (the local party organizations), and nearly two million in the *Opera Nazionale Balilla* (the Fascist organization of children and youths),⁴⁹ while the remainder were registered with Fascist syndicates and associations. The government expects that as Fascism penetrates into national life the basis of selection to

48. *Corriere della Sera*, March 5, 1931.

49. The *Opera Nazionale Balilla*, established by a law of April 1926, comprises four organizations: *Balilla* (boys aged 8 to 14); *Avanguardisti* (Advance Guard—boys aged 14 to 18); *Piccole Italiane* (girls aged 8 to 14); and *Giovani Italiane* (girls aged 14 to 18). The *Opera Nazionale Balilla* is placed under the control of the Ministry of National Education. In 1930, it was estimated that 110,000 *Balilla* passed into the Advance Guard, and 90,000 *Avanguardisti* were "graduated" into the Fascist party and the Voluntary Militia for National Security. Cf. Balbino Giuliano, "L'Opera Nazionale Balilla," *Lo Stato Mussoliniano* (Rome, Rassegna Nazionale, 1930), p. 256. The organization and work of the *Opera Nazionale Balilla* will be examined in greater detail in a forthcoming *Foreign Policy Report*.

45. Cf. Salvemini, *The Fascist Dictatorship in Italy*, cited; Giacomo Matteotti, *The Fascisti Exposed* (London, Independent Labour Party, 1924).

46. The Grand Council was established shortly after the March on Rome.

47. The amended statute was published in the official organ of the party, *Foglio d'Ordine*; cf. *Corriere della Sera*, December 22, 1929.

the ranks of the party will be correspondingly broadened, and that the party will eventually be fused with the nation. "The Fascist party," says a Fascist publicist, "must not become a closed professional class. Fascists should not represent themselves as the only national element in a population of forty-two million."⁵⁰ The party, in turn, is

expected to serve as a training school for the ruling class (*classe dirigente*). This class, likewise, according to Mussolini, must not withdraw to an ivory tower, remote from the popular masses. It must, on the contrary, establish a direct contact with the needs and aspirations of the people, and thus become a truly "popular régime."⁵¹

THE POLITICAL STRUCTURE OF THE FASCIST STATE

The extent to which Fascism has transformed the state in accordance with its doctrines may be ascertained only after a study of the political and economic changes introduced since 1922. Fascist leaders claim that the March on Rome, while it involved no social upheaval and resulted in little bloodshed, was a revolution in the broadest sense of the term. This revolution has left its marks on the political and economic structure of the state. The power of the monarch has been curtailed; government has been entrusted to a single party and primarily to its leader, Mussolini; and the Fascist Grand Council has become a constitutional organ, while the Chamber of Deputies has been reorganized and shorn of many of its previous functions. The maintenance of public order has been confided to a voluntary militia recruited from Fascist ranks, all opposition has been suppressed, and a special tribunal has been established for crimes against the safety of the state. The government has prohibited action by either workers or employers in defense of class interests, and has created a system of Fascist syndicates which alone can give representation to the interests of the two groups, subject to control by the state. Finally, changes have been effected in education which are intended to produce a new spirit in Italian youth, and pave the way for complete "fascistization" of national life.

When the Fascist party came to power, it expressed the intention to preserve the existing political structure, and to govern within the framework of the *Statuto*.⁵² Later, however, Mussolini came to the conclusion

that Italy could not be "fascistized" without alteration of the constitution. "We must violate the *Statuto*," he declared in 1925.⁵³ He defended his position by claiming that the *Statuto* no longer corresponded to the needs of the country and had, in fact, been revoked by the march of events.⁵⁴ Fascism, he said, intended to do no more than prune the constitution of the overgrowths which had gradually obscured its original meaning. He denied that any constitution could be regarded as immutable. "Are we dealing with archeology or with politics. . . ? Constitutions are but instruments resulting from given historical conditions, which undergo birth, development and decline."⁵⁵ The avowed aim of the government, at that time, was to conserve, not revolutionize, the constitution.

THE EXECUTIVE POWER

Mussolini's first act was to assert the pre-eminence of the executive over the legislative power. In the past, he claimed, the executive had been merely a puppet of Parliament. This condition could be tolerated no longer. The ultimate source of executive power presented a constitutional problem. In the early days of Fascism, Mussolini had declared himself opposed to the monarchy. In 1922, however, he made a concession to popular sentiment, especially in the ranks of the army. He said: "We shall leave monarchy outside our game, because we think that Italy would look with suspicion on a transformation of the government which would eliminate monarchy."⁵⁶ He believed that the King would not find it to his interest to obstruct the Fascist revolution. Should the

50. Virginio Gayda, "I Cicli del Fascismo," *Il Giornale d'Italia*, October 10, 1930.

51. Mussolini, *Discorsi del 1926*, cited, p. 339.

52. Cf. address of Mussolini in the Senate, November 27, 1922, Gorgolini, *La Rivoluzione Fascista*, cited, p. 111.

53. Mussolini, *Discorsi del 1925*, cited, p. 97.

54. Mussolini, *Discorsi del 1928* (Milan, Alpes, 1929), p. 101.

55. *Ibid.*

56. Mussolini, *Discorsi della Rivoluzione*, cited, p. 32.

monarchy attempt to resist, "we would have to abolish it, as it would be a question of life or death."⁵⁷ Still later, he expressed the conviction that "the unitary régime of Italy rests solidly on the House of Savoy," and that the monarchy, by reason of its origins and historical development, could not oppose the tendencies of the new national forces.⁵⁸

Mussolini's expectations were realized. The House of Savoy appears to have accepted Fascism without reservations. Both Victor Emanuel III and Prince Humbert, the heir to the throne, have participated in Fascist functions and, outwardly at least, have sanctioned the acts of the Fascist government. The King's acceptance of Fascism has been denounced by anti-Fascists as treason to the constitution. When a young anti-Fascist, De Rosa, attempted to assassinate Prince Humbert in Brussels in 1929, he defended his act on the ground that the prince had proved unworthy of Italy's faith in the monarchy.⁵⁹

The "Head of the Government"

Constitutionally, then, the executive power is still vested in the King.⁶⁰ Actually, however, a significant transformation has been effected by the law of December 24, 1925 concerning "the attributes and prerogatives of the head of the government" (*Il Capo del Governo*).⁶¹ This law is intended to legalize the position and functions of the Prime Minister, who had hitherto been recognized by parliamentary practice, but had remained unknown to the constitution. It states that the executive power is to be exercised by the King with the aid of his government. The government is composed of the Prime Minister and other ministers. The Prime Minister is the "head of the government"; he is nominated and recalled by the King alone. He directs and coordinates the work of the government, and is responsible to the King for its general political direction. No

question can be included in the agenda of either chamber without the consent of the Prime Minister. He has power to ask that any bill rejected by either chamber be re-introduced when at least three months have elapsed since the first vote. In such a case vote by secret ballot takes place without further discussion. If the government, meanwhile, has proposed amendments to the bill, discussion is limited to these amendments. The Prime Minister may likewise demand that a bill rejected by either chamber be transmitted to the other, there to be examined and voted upon; this provision is intended to reduce to a minimum the delay formerly occasioned by parliamentary procedure. Finally, the law prescribes various terms of imprisonment for any act directed against the life, liberty or integrity of the Prime Minister. The law of November 25, 1926 on the defense of the state goes further, and prescribes the death penalty for such acts.⁶²

When presenting the law concerning the head of the government to the Chamber of Deputies, Alfredo Rocco, Minister of Justice, stressed the fact that the Prime Minister was a true *capo del governo*, not merely *primus inter pares*: on him, and not on the Council of Ministers, devolves the task of coordinating and directing the work of his colleagues. "Our Prime Minister," said Rocco, "is the recognized head of the great political, economic and moral forces of the country and those represented in Parliament, the evaluation of whose importance is subject to the decision of the sovereign."⁶³ The government, he explained in the Senate, "can no longer express conflicting political thoughts; it must be the expression of a single political thought, of a single conception of the state; else there would be paralysis, such as existed during the years which preceded Fascism."⁶⁴ It is significant that the law contains no reference to parliamentary responsibility on the part of the Prime Minister.

In practice, Mussolini has undertaken the work of several ministries in addition to the office of head of the government: in 1928

57. *Ibid.*, p. 33.

58. Speech at Fascist Congress in Naples, October 24, 1922, *ibid.*, p. 80.

59. Cf. *Le Procès De Rosa* (Paris, Valois, 1930), particularly the testimony of MM. Nitti and Trachiani, p. 64 and 78. De Rosa was tried in Brussels in 1930 by the Court of Assizes, and condemned to five years' imprisonment. His counsel made a sweeping attack on the Fascist government, and was supported by a number of anti-Fascists called as witnesses.

60. Article 5 of the *Statuto* provides that the King alone possesses executive power.

61. *Gazzetta Ufficiale del Regno d'Italia*, No. 301, December 29, 1925, p. 5067.

62. *Gazzetta Ufficiale*, No. 281, December 6, 1926, p. 5314.

63. Alfredo Rocco, *La Trasformazione dello Stato* (Rome, "La Voce," 1927), p. 199-202.

64. *Ibid.*, p. 204.

he held the portfolios of foreign affairs, war, marine, aviation, interior and labor. On September 12, 1929, however, a reorganization of the cabinet was effected by royal decree, under-secretaries being raised to the post of ministers. Mussolini retained only the portfolio of the interior, as well as the position of commander-general of the militia.⁶⁵ Competent observers believe that the change was merely nominal, and that the new ministers are no less subject than before to direct control by the head of the government.

**Promulgation of "Decree-Laws"
by the Executive**

The scope of the Prime Minister's power has been further broadened by the law of January 31, 1926 concerning the power of the executive to promulgate decrees having the force of law.⁶⁶ The *Statuto* provides that the legislative power shall be exercised collectively by the King and the two chambers.⁶⁷ The Italian government had frequently invoked this article to adopt legislative measures by means of decree-laws (*decreti-leggi*). This practice became more deeply rooted during the World War and the early years of Fascism. In 1924, when public opinion had been aroused by the Matteotti affair,⁶⁸ Mussolini declared that he would no longer resort to such decrees. The law of 1926, however, provides that decrees may be promulgated regarding the execution of the laws, the exercise of the executive power, and the organization of state administration. Decrees having the force of law may likewise be issued in extraordinary cases where urgent action is required. Such decrees must be published immediately in the official gazette, and submitted to Parliament without delay; they cease to be in force after two years if they have not meanwhile been adopted by Parliament. The Fascist government defends the law of 1926 on the ground that it regulates and limits a power which otherwise

would be subject to abuse. Opponents of Fascism, however, declare that the government has frequently promulgated legislation by decree without giving it publicity, that it has failed to consult Parliament within the prescribed period of time, and that the law of 1926 legalizes a dangerous encroachment of the executive power on the legislature.⁶⁹

Three other legislative measures have served to broaden the scope of the executive power and to consolidate the position of the Fascist government. A law of December 24, 1925 authorized the government to dismiss civil and military employees who had failed to give a guarantee of their fidelity to duty or had placed themselves in a position incompatible with the general policy of the government.⁷⁰ This law, which was first announced as a transitional measure, was prolonged, and extended to local administrative employees, teachers in elementary schools and other grades of public service; its provisions were permanently embodied in a decree of January 3, 1927 regarding the legal status of civil employees. By a law of December 24, 1925 the government was empowered to amend the penal code, to modify the civil code and to reorganize the system of judicial administration.⁷¹ In accordance with this law, the government undertook the re-codification of civil and penal laws, adopted a new penal code in 1931, and in 1926 established the Special Tribunal for the Defense of the State.⁷² Finally, a law of December 31, 1925 authorized the government to modify the laws concerning public safety, and to promulgate a single law on the subject.⁷³ The provisions of this law were given effect by a decree of November 6, 1926 which regulates all questions relating to public safety.⁷⁴

THE GRAND COUNCIL

The consolidation of the Fascist government raised two important issues—the extent to which the Fascist party had become a permanent factor in national life, and the method of assuring its continuance in power.

65. The cabinet is now composed as follows: Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior, Benito Mussolini; Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dino Grandi; Minister of Corporations, Giuseppe Bottai; Minister for the Colonies, Emilio De Bono; Minister of Public Works, Araldo di Crollolanza; Minister of War, Pietro Gazzera; Minister of Marine, Giuseppe Sirianni; Minister of Agriculture and Forests, Giacomo Acerbo; Minister of National Education, Balbino Giuliano; Minister of Finance, Antonio Mosconi; Minister of Justice and Cults, Alfredo Rocco; Minister of Communications, Costanzo Ciano; Minister of Aviation, Italo Balbo.

66. *Gazzetta Ufficiale*, No. 25, February 1, 1926, p. 426.

67. Article 2.

68. Cf. p. 63.

69. Cf. Francesco Ferrari, *Le Régime Fasciste Italien* (Paris, Editions Spes, 1928), p. 114-115.

70. *Gazzetta Ufficiale*, No. 2, January 4, 1926, p. 11.

71. *Ibid.*, No. 301, December 29, 1925, p. 5066.

72. For discussion of the work of this tribunal, cf. p. 71.

73. *Gazzetta Ufficiale*, No. 4, January 7, 1926, p. 34.

74. For an analysis of the provisions of this decree, cf. p. 70.

Mussolini's favorite slogan is *durare* (to last). He recognizes, however, that this aim can be achieved only by means of the "fascistization" of Italy. An attempt to settle both issues simultaneously is made in the law of December 9, 1928 which establishes the Fascist Grand Council as the supreme coordinating organ of the state, and vests it with the power to regulate succession to the government.⁷⁵

Composition of the Council

The Grand Council is charged with the task of coordinating all the activities of the Fascist régime. The head of the government is "by right" president of the Grand Council; he alone can convoke it and determine its procedure. The secretary of the Fascist party serves as secretary of the Grand Council. The membership of the council falls into three categories. The first category is composed of the *quadrumviri* who participated in the March on Rome and who are appointed to the council for an unlimited period of time. The second category includes the presidents of the Senate and Chamber of Deputies; the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, the Interior, Justice, Finance, National Education, Agriculture and Forests, and Corporations; the commander-general of the militia; the secretary and the two vice-secretaries of the Fascist party; the president of the Royal Italian Academy; the president of the Special Tribunal for the Defense of the State; the presidents of the National Fascist Confederations and of the National Confederations of Fascist Syndicates of Industry and Agriculture. Members of this category form part of the Grand Council as long as they hold their respective offices; they are nominated by royal decree on proposal of the head of the government, and may be recalled at any time. Finally, the head of the government may nominate for three years, with the right of reappointment, any persons who have "deserved well of the nation and the cause of the Fascist revolution."⁷⁶

75. *Gazzetta Ufficiale*, No. 287, December 11, 1928, p. 5978; amended by law of December 14, 1929, *ibid.*, No. 292, December 17, 1929.

76. The Grand Council is at present composed as follows: President, Benito Mussolini; Secretary, Giovanni Giuriati, president of the Chamber of Deputies and secretary of the National Fascist party; Italo Balbo, *quadrumvir*; Emilio De Bono,

Members of the Grand Council receive no remuneration. No member may be arrested or subjected to police procedure without the authorization of the council. No disciplinary measures may be taken against any member of the council who is at the same time a member of the Fascist party without the approval of the council. The meetings of the council are secret, and are usually held at night. The *communiqués* of the council's proceedings are generally brief, and more concerned with the action adopted than with the discussion which may have preceded it.⁷⁷

Relations of the Council with the State and the Party

The Grand Council is vested with both consultative and advisory functions. It acts as a consultative body in "all cases specified by law." These include the statutes, ordinances and policies of the Fascist party; the nomination and recall of Fascist officials and other members of the party organization; and the selection of candidates for the Chamber of Deputies. The advice of the Grand Council must be sought on all questions of a constitutional character. These include all bills concerning the following subjects: succession to the throne; the attributes and prerogatives of the Crown; the composition and function of the Grand Council, the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies; the attributes and prerogatives of the head of the government; the right of the executive to issue decrees having the force of law; the organization of syndicates and corporations; relations with the Holy See; and international agreements involving territorial changes. In addition, the Grand Council acts in an advisory capacity on all political, economic and social questions which the head of the government may submit to it.

quadrumvir; Cesare De Vecchi, *quadrumvir*; Luigi Federzoni, president of Senate; Dino Grandi, Minister of Foreign Affairs; Alfredo Rocco, Minister of Justice and Cults; Antonio Mosconi, Minister of Finance; Balbino Giuliano, Minister of National Education; Giacomo Acerbo, Minister of Agriculture and Forests; Giuseppe Bottai, Minister of Corporations; Guglielmo Marconi, president of Royal Academy; Achille Starace, vice-secretary of the National Fascist party; Iti Bacci, vice-secretary of the Fascist party; Guido Cristini, president of the Special Tribunal for the Defense of the State; Antonio Benni, president of the General Fascist Confederation of Industry; Giuseppe Tassinari, president of the National Fascist Confederation of Agriculturists; Umberto Klinger, president of the National Confederation of Fascist Syndicates of Industry; Luigi Razza, president of the National Confederation of Fascist Syndicates of Agriculture; Costanzo Ciano, Minister of Communications; Edmondo Rossoni, Minister of State, deputy; Alberto De Stefani, deputy; Augusto Turati, deputy.

77. For a record of the early years of the council, cf. Partito Nazionale Fascista, *Il Gran Consiglio nei Primi Cinque Anni dell'Era Fascista* (Rome, Libreria del Littorio, 1927), p. 69.

The Grand Council, however, is not merely a consultative and advisory body; it is, in a sense, the ultimate source of both executive and legislative power, subject only to the control of the head of the government, and responsible to him alone. On proposal of the head of the government, the Grand Council draws up a list of names which are to be submitted to the Crown in the event of vacancy, and from which the King is to select Mussolini's successor. The Grand Council, likewise, prepares the official list of four hundred candidates to the Chamber of Deputies, which is presented to the voters for a plebiscite.

By the law of December 9, 1928 the Grand Council, which was and remains the governing body of the Fascist party, was transformed into a constitutional organ of the state, charged with effecting a synthesis of the country's political, economic and social forces. In a speech to the Senate on November 8, 1928 Mussolini declared that this legalization of the Grand Council would have far-reaching implications. "The National Fascist party has in this manner been incorporated in the state and has become one of its fundamental institutions. . . . Thus is completed the evolution by which the National Fascist party, from a simple private association like the parties of the old régime, has been transformed into a great institution of public law, the fundamental instrument of the régime. . . . Fascism henceforth identifies itself with the nation and with the state. To say Grand Council of Fascism is equivalent to saying Grand Council of the nation and the state."⁷⁸ The law was approved by the Chamber of Deputies without discussion. In the Senate, however, it met with considerable opposition. "This bill," said Mussolini, addressing the Senate on November 15, 1928, "has given rise to comprehensible and respectable hesitations, but also to oblique manoeuvres and to insulting vociferations."⁷⁹ The Senate finally passed the bill by a vote of 181 to 19, with two abstentions.⁸⁰

78. *Corriere della Sera*, November 9, 1928.

79. *Ibid.*, November 16, 1928.

80. The following senators voted against the law: Abbate, Albertini, Bergamasco, Bergamini, Bollati, Casati, Cornaggia, Croce, Della Torre, Diena, Paterno, Federico Ricci, Ruffini, Stoppatto, Valenzani, Vigliani, Volterra, Wollemborg and Zupelli. Senators De Cupis and Nava, who were present, abstained from voting.

Criticism of the Council

The chief criticism directed against the Grand Council by opponents of Fascism is that it constitutionalizes and perpetuates the rule of a single political party, while materially curtailing the functions of both King and Parliament. Anti-Fascists claim that no reforms of a constitutional character can henceforth be initiated by the Chamber of Deputies, and that the Grand Council thus blocks political and economic evolution by peaceful means. Fascist spokesmen, for their part, assert that the Grand Council does not limit the power of the King, but merely facilitates his selection of a successor to the post of head of the government. In their opinion, the Grand Council does not supplant Parliament, since its functions are largely consultative; its existence simply reaffirms the principle established by the *Statuto*, that the government must enjoy the confidence of the monarch rather than of Parliament. Finally, they believe that the Grand Council fulfills the indispensable function of assuring both unity and continuity in administration.⁸¹

THE CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES

The Fascist party, as has already been pointed out, rejects the doctrine of popular sovereignty and regards parliamentary institutions as both harmful and obsolete. Nevertheless, Mussolini did not undertake to reform Parliament immediately on his advent to power. In his first speech to the Chamber of Deputies on November 16, 1922, he stated that his appearance there was an act of deference. "I could," he said, "make of this dim gray hall a bivouac of Fascist soldiers. I could close Parliament and constitute an exclusively Fascist government. I could, but do not wish, at least at first, to do this." He warned the Chamber, however, that "it must feel its peculiar position, which makes its dissolution possible within two days or two months."⁸² Speaking in the Senate on November 27, 1922, he said: "Who prevents me from closing Parliament? Who prevents me from proclaiming a dictatorship of two, three or five persons. . . . ? No one!" He

81. Cf. Giovanni Corso, *Lo Stato Fascista* (Rome, Libreria del Littorio, 1929), p. 457.

82. Mussolini, *Discorsi della Rivoluzione*, cited, p. 104.

added that he had subordinated egoism to the supreme interests of the country, and had decided to confine the Fascist movement to the limits of the constitution.⁸³

The Fascist party, which soon absorbed the Nationalist party, did not at the outset appear intransigent toward other political groups. The first Fascist cabinet contained two Liberals, two Popularists and two Social-Democrats.⁸⁴ Fascist cooperation with these parties, however, was more nominal than real. In 1923 the government broke with the Popular party, and in 1924 with the Social-Democrats. These breaks were the outward sign of a widening rift between the government and the Chamber, which Mussolini described as the last refuge of forces hostile to Fascism.⁸⁵ The Chamber was finally dissolved, and new elections were called for April 6, 1924.

The Elections of 1924

These elections were held under the terms of an electoral law by which the country was divided into fifteen large constituencies, in each of which the various parties were to present their respective candidates. The party whose lists secured relatively the largest number of votes was to obtain two-thirds of the 535 seats in the Chamber of Deputies, numbering 356. The remaining 179 seats were to be distributed among other parties on the basis of proportional representation. The chief merit of this system, according to a Fascist writer, was "that the majority was compact and amenable to strict party discipline."⁸⁶ The opposition parties were unable to come to an understanding, and each went to the polls with its own list, while Fascist supporters and sympathizers presented a united front. Of the total vote, estimated at over seven and a half million, four and a half million votes were cast for the Fascist party (including the Nationalists), which received 375 seats in the Chamber, and nearly three million for opposition parties, which were assigned 160 seats.⁸⁷

The Matteotti Affair

On May 30, 1924 the Socialist deputy Giacomo Matteotti made a speech in the new Chamber in which he contested the validity of the Fascist majority. He declared that the voters had not been given an opportunity to express their opinion freely, and that the government had prejudged the results of the elections by stating that, whatever the outcome, it would still remain in power. He described and denounced various violations of the electoral law, and closed his speech, which had been constantly interrupted, by demanding the annulment of the elections.⁸⁸ Commenting on this speech, Mussolini's organ, *Popolo d'Italia*, said on June 1, 1924: "The honorable Matteotti has made a monstrously provocative speech which would merit something more tangible than the epithet 'ruffian' [which had been applied to him by a Fascist deputy]." Addressing the Chamber of Deputies on June 6, 1924 Mussolini praised the example of Russia "where there are magnificent teachers. . . . We made a mistake," he declared, "not to imitate them fully, because at this hour you would no longer be here, you would be in prison. . . . You would have had lead in your back. But we have courage, and we shall prove it to you."⁸⁹ On the following day, again in the Chamber of Deputies, Mussolini declared that he would make Parliament function, and invited the opposition to give him "positive or negative collaboration"; political indifference, he said, would condemn the opposition to "perpetual exile from history."⁹⁰

Three days after this speech, on June 10, Matteotti suddenly disappeared. On June 12 Mussolini attempted to reassure the Chamber of Deputies regarding the fate of Matteotti, and stated that the police were making every effort to probe the mystery. The disappearance, he said, had taken place "in circumstances of time and place not yet as-

others who, while not members of the Fascist party, were in sympathy with its policy. The opposition seats were divided as follows: 25 followers of Giolitti and other small independent groups, 40 Popularists, 25 Unitary Socialists, 14 Maximalists, 19 Communists, 8 Republicans and 25 Democrats. For an account of this election from the anti-Fascist point of view, cf. Sturzo, *Italy and Fascism*, cited; Salvemini, *The Fascist Dictatorship in Italy*, cited; Ferrari, *Le Régime Fasciste*, cited, p. 55-56.

88. Italy, *Atti del Parlamento Italiano, Camera dei Deputati, XXVII Legislatura, Sessione 1924-25, Discussioni* (Rome, Printing Office of the Chamber of Deputies, 1925), Vol. I, p. 57 et seq.

89. *Ibid.*, p. 206.

90. *Ibid.*, p. 246.

83. Gorgolini, *La Rivoluzione Fascista*, cited, p. 111.

84. The Liberals were Gentile and De Capitani; the Popularists were Tangorra and Cavazzoni; the Social-Democrats were Carnazza and the Duke of Cesarò. Of these Gentile, De Capitani and Carnazza subsequently became Fascists.

85. Mussolini, *La Nuova Politica*, cited, Vol. II, p. 204.

86. Villari, *The Fascist Experiment*, cited, p. 207.

87. The seats assigned to the Fascist party included those given to so-called "philo-Fascists"—Liberals, Democrats and

certained but such as to arouse suspicion of a crime which, if it had been committed, could but arouse the indignation and emotion of Parliament." The Socialist deputy Gonzales cried "Then Matteotti is dead!" In the midst of general commotion the Republican deputy Chiesa shouted: "Let the head of the government speak! He is silent! He is an accomplice!"⁹¹ On June 13, when it became apparent that Matteotti had been murdered, Mussolini said in the Chamber of Deputies:

"If there is anyone here who has the right to be grieved and, I may add, exasperated, it is I. Only an enemy of mine, who for many a long night had meditated on some diabolic act against me could have committed this crime which today fills us with horror and draws from us a cry of indignation. The situation . . . is extremely delicate."⁹²

On June 24 in the Senate, he quoted Talleyrand, and said of the Matteotti affair: "It is not only a crime but a blunder." Senator Albertini, an opponent of Fascism, made the following statement on that occasion:

"The apparent order which now reigns in Italy is founded not on the restoration of the authority of the Italian state but on the application, by irresponsible powers, of sanctions as humiliating for human dignity as they are terrible in their uncertainty against whoever disapproves too much of what takes place on the periphery or at the centre."⁹³

Police investigation revealed that Matteotti had been kidnapped on June 10 by five Fascists, and had subsequently been murdered. The body was not recovered until two months later. The investigation implicated Finzi, Under-Secretary for the Interior, and Cesare Rossi, chief of the Press Department. Fascist writers do not attempt to defend Finzi who, they claim, proved "a broken reed" when Mussolini, burdened by other duties, entrusted him with the bulk of the work in the Ministry of the Interior.⁹⁴ Finzi resigned but asked for an official inquiry into his conduct, which was refused. Yielding to public indignation, Mussolini placed Luigi Federzoni, formerly a Nationalist, in charge of the Ministry of the Interior. General De Bono, who had hitherto combined the duties of Director of Public

Safety and Commander-General of the militia, was forced to resign the former office; subsequently he was appointed Governor of Tripoli, and is now Minister for the Colonies. Other prominent Fascists were involved in the affair, and it was even rumored that both Finzi and Rossi had implicated Mussolini in their confessions. Following preliminary examination of the case by a parliamentary committee, the five men accused of murdering Matteotti were brought to trial in 1926. The trial was held in the small town of Chieti in the Abruzzes, and Farinacci, Secretary-General of the Fascist party, acted as counsel for the defendants. Two of the defendants were acquitted, and the three others condemned to imprisonment; they were, however, released two months later, under the terms of an amnesty granted in 1925.⁹⁵ It is believed, in Fascist circles, that Matteotti was murdered by extreme Fascists who wished to prevent any possibility of further collaboration between the government and the opposition.

The Opposition Withdraws from Parliament

The Matteotti affair aroused public opinion to an extraordinary pitch. The government was attacked in the Senate, and bitterly denounced by the press. The Italian historian Guglielmo Ferrero described the elections of 1924 as a "strangulation of the country."⁹⁶ Mussolini himself, addressing the Grand Council on July 22, 1924, acknowledged that the murder of Matteotti had produced "a profound moral oscillation in the Italian masses."⁹⁷ The Opposition parties, as a sign of protest, withdrew from the Chamber of Deputies immediately following the murder of Matteotti, and became known as the "Aventine."⁹⁸ The "elder statesmen"—Giollitti, Orlando and Salandra—who hitherto had sympathized with the Fascist government while maintaining an independent

91. *Ibid.*, p. 323 et seq.

92. Mussolini, *La Nuova Politica*, cited, Vol. III, p. 172-173.

93. Italy, *Atti Parlamentari della Camera dei Senatori, Legislatura XXVII, Discussioni, 1a Sessione 1924* (Rome, Senate Printing Office, 1924), p. 84.

94. Villari, *The Fascist Experiment*, cited, p. 69.

95. For details of this trial, cf. Salvemini, *The Fascist Dictatorship in Italy*, cited, and Villari, *The Fascist Experiment*, cited. For Matteotti's views on Fascism, cf. Matteotti, *The Fascists Exposed*, cited. In addition to Matteotti, the Fascist government is charged by its opponents with the death of Giovanni Amendola, a Liberal deputy, and Piero Gobetti, a Liberal editor, both of whom died in exile, as a result, it is claimed, of maltreatment at the hands of Fascists.

96. Guglielmo Ferrero, *La Democrazia in Italia* (Milan, Edizioni della Rassegna Internazionale, 1925).

97. Mussolini, *La Nuova Politica*, cited, Vol. III, p. 209.

98. This name was given the Opposition parties because their secession resembled the withdrawal of the Roman plebs to the Sacred Mount in 494 B.C. as a sign of protest against the exactions of the patricians.

position in Parliament, now joined the ranks of the opposition. It is the opinion of competent observers that at no time in its history was the Fascist government in such grave danger of downfall as in the summer and autumn of 1924.

Mussolini Inaugurates Policy of Intransigence

The Opposition parties, however, failed to rally the country against Fascism. The government, supported by the propertied classes, which desired the maintenance of public order at any cost, and strengthened by sympathizers in the ranks of other parties, known as *fiancheggiatori* (flankers), adopted a policy of repression and intransigence. On January 3, 1925, in a speech which inaugurated a new era in the history of Fascism, Mussolini denied the existence of a Fascist Cheka, and challenged the Chamber of Deputies to impeach him for the murder of Matteotti. He declared that he accepted full responsibility for the Matteotti affair.

"If Fascism has been nothing more than castor oil and cudgels, and not a magnificent passion of the best youth of Italy, the fault is mine. If Fascism has been a criminal association, well, I am its chief, and I am responsible! If all the acts of violence are the result of a certain historical, political and moral atmosphere, the responsibility for this is mine, for this historical, political and moral atmosphere was created by me, by means of propaganda which starts with Italian intervention in the war and comes down to the present day."⁹⁹

Mussolini's watchwords to the Fascists were: "Absolute intransigence, theoretical and practical," and "All power to all Fascism." He reaffirmed his conviction that opposition is neither sacred nor untouchable. He denounced the "Aventine" as seditious and unconstitutional. The Opposition parties replied by a manifesto which declared that the "Aventine" was a "resolute and irrepressible protest against the most atrocious crime of the régime."

The government, however, had gained the upper hand, and proceeded to strengthen its position in 1925 by a series of legislative

measures known as *leggi fascistissime* (most Fascist laws), dealing with the press, secret associations, the civil service and public safety. These measures were adopted with little discussion by the Chamber of Deputies, now composed only of Fascists and Fascist sympathizers. Various acts of violence committed at this time against anti-Fascists were pardoned under the terms of an amnesty granted by the King on the twenty-fifth anniversary of his reign.

Collapse of the Opposition

Meanwhile, the Opposition parties, temporarily united by the Matteotti affair, gradually drifted apart, and after July 1925 the "Aventine" ceased to exist except as a convenient phrase. Continued abstention from parliamentary work robbed the opposition of the last vestiges of power, while the government's legislation concerning the right of association and the press deprived them of all means of action and expression. The government, for its part, had no intention of parleying with the opposition. When members of the Popular party attempted to return to the Chamber of Deputies in January 1926, Mussolini declared that the secessionists would be "tolerated" only if they undertook to accept Fascism unconditionally and to dissociate themselves from anti-Fascist activities at home and abroad.¹ This ultimatum marked the close of parliamentary government in Italy.

The task of examining various problems regarding "the fundamental relations between the state and the forces which it must contain and guarantee" had been entrusted by the government on January 31, 1925 to a commission of eighteen Senators, deputies and experts, headed by the philosopher, Giovanni Gentile, formerly Minister of Education.² The Gentile Commission favored modernization of the *Statuto*, and elaborated a reform of the Chamber of Deputies which formed the basis of the law of May 17, 1928 on political representation.³ This law was

99. Mussolini, *Discorsi del 1925*, cited, p. 13-14. Commenting on this speech, Salvemini remarks that Mussolini accepted moral, political and historical, but not penal, responsibility for the Matteotti affair. Cf. Salvemini, *The Fascist Dictatorship in Italy*, cited.

1. Mussolini, *Discorsi del 1926*, cited, p. 10-11.

2. This commission took the place of a similar body of fifteen men appointed in 1924 by the Fascist party for the same purpose.

3. *Gazzetta Ufficiale*, No. 118, May 21, 1928, p. 2150. Some of the recommendations of the Gentile commission were not finally embodied in the law of May 17, 1928.

passed by the Chamber of Deputies acting, to use Mussolini's phrase, as a constituent assembly.

The Electoral Law of 1928

The law of May 17, 1928 establishes a single electoral district—the nation. Eight hundred candidates are to be designated by Fascist syndicates; and two hundred by “the legally constituted bodies and by associations, the scope of which is cultural, educational, charitable or propagandist, and which exist owing to the fact that they are of national importance.” Candidates are assigned to the various organizations in accordance with the relative weight of the latter in the productive life of the country. The candidates must be men not only of recognized professional ability, but capable as well “of furthering the historical aims of the nation.” That none but Fascists may expect to be selected was indicated by Mussolini when he said, in his farewell speech to the old Chamber of Deputies on December 8, 1928: “If the Chamber which is about to conclude its labors today has been, from the point of view of numbers, eighty-five per cent Fascist, the Chamber which will assemble for the first time on Saturday, April 20 of Year VII (1929), will be a one hundred per cent Fascist chamber.”⁴

Preparation of the National List

From the one thousand names presented by the syndicates and other associations, the Grand Council selects a list of four hundred names, which is then submitted to the voters for a “plebiscite.” The right to vote is conditioned on active participation in national life, whether as producers or taxpayers. All male Italian citizens who have reached the age of twenty-one (or eighteen, if they are married and have children), may vote if they pay syndicate contributions, or one hundred lire in taxes; if they receive a pension from the state; or if they belong to the clergy. The voters are asked only one question: “Do you approve of the list of deputies designated by the National Grand Council?” and their sole function consists in answering “yes” or “no.” In other words the voters are invited to express their views, not regarding individual candidates, but regarding

the program of the government as a whole. In the event the country should reject the list prepared by the Grand Council, lists of deputies shall be drawn up by all the associations, and the voters shall be permitted to make a choice among these lists. All candidates on the list which obtains the greatest number of votes shall then be declared elected and the seats reserved for the minority shall be distributed among the remaining lists. This provision, however, is viewed by Fascist spokesmen as of little importance, since rejection of the list prepared by the Grand Council is regarded as impossible.⁵ Moreover, Mussolini declared in the Chamber of Deputies on December 8, 1928 that even a vote unfavorable to Fascism would not cause the overthrow of the government. “We are mathematically certain of continuance in power.”⁶

The “Plebiscite” of 1929

The new electoral law was first put to the test in the “plebiscite” held on March 24, 1929. The confederations of employees and employers in each branch of national economy were assigned the same number of candidates. This apparent equality resulted actually in considerable inequality between the two groups. Thus the employers' and employees' confederations of industry each presented 80 candidates, although the former consisted of 71,459 and the latter of 1,300,000 members. Similarly, the employers' confederation of agriculture composed of 314,658 members named 96 candidates, the number assigned to the employees' confederation, representing 1,021,461.⁷ Critics of

5. “La Elezione dei Deputati,” *Corriere della Sera*, February 1, 1929.

6. *Corriere della Sera*, December 9, 1928. Cf. also speech by Achille Starace, vice-secretary of the Fascist party, April 23, 1929: “If the twelve million votes ‘yes’ should transform themselves into twenty-four million ‘noes,’ Mussolini would still remain at Palazzo Venezia and the revolution of the Black Shirts would not thereby have suffered any check.” *Il Popolo d'Italia*, April 24, 1929, translated by Carmen Halder, *Capital and Labor under Fascism* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1930), p. 257.

7. The distribution of the eight hundred candidates assigned to National Confederations of Fascist Syndicates was made as follows:

Agricultural	Employers	.....	96	(12%)
“	Employees	.....	96	(12%)
Industrial	Employers	.....	80	(10%)
“	Employees	.....	80	(10%)
Commercial	Employers	.....	48	(6%)
“	Employees	.....	48	(6%)
Maritime and Air	Transportation Employers	.....	40	(5%)
“	“	“	40	(5%)
Land Transportation and Inland Navigation	Employers	.....	32	(4%)
Land Transportation and Inland Navigation	Employees	.....	32	(4%)
Bank	Employers	.....	24	(3%)
“	Employees	.....	24	(3%)
Professional Men and Artists	.....	.....	160	(20%)

TOTAL800

4. *Corriere della Sera*, December 9, 1928. The year 1922 is regarded as year I of the Fascist era, and all public documents bear a double date, such as 1929 (A.VII).

this procedure claim further that it fails to give the various economic interests a representation commensurate with their actual weight in the life of the country. Thus, agriculture, which forms the occupation of more than fifty per cent of the population, is accorded less than one-fourth of the total number of candidates.⁸

The list prepared by the Grand Council and published on March 1, 1929 consisted entirely of Fascists selected, according to the official *communiqué*, on the basis of personal qualifications and length of service in the party. Of the 400 candidates, 55 had joined the Fascist organizations in 1919, 54 in 1920, 65 in 1921, 60 in 1922, 59 in 1923, 36 in 1924 and 30 in 1925.⁹ The elections were preceded by a week of active propaganda. Deputies and members of the government designated for this purpose by the Grand Council were sent to the more important centres to deliver speeches illustrating the activities of the government in various fields.¹⁰ Individuals and groups opposed to Fascism were given no opportunity to advocate their views. The voters were warned by their respective syndicates, and frequently by their employers, that they might be deprived of various privileges, and even of their jobs, if they failed to appear at the polls or cast a negative vote. The president of the National Confederation of Fascist Syndicates of Industry issued a circular stating that "industrial workers must go to the polls perfectly organized, and demonstrate their acceptance of the régime."¹¹ The Catholic clergy, gratified by the conclusion of the Lateran Accord on February 11, 1929,¹² urged their parishioners to vote for the government list.¹³ The Federation of Catholic Men advised its members to vote "yes" in a plebiscite "by which the Italian people is called on to express its own thought regarding the

government program."¹⁴ Finally, the tenth anniversary of the *Fasci di Combattimento* was celebrated on March 23, the day preceding the elections, and was the occasion for public demonstrations of loyalty to the government.

Fascists Victorious at the Polls

Critics of Fascism assert that the vote was cast under conditions which made the voters' apparent freedom of choice completely illusory. The voting was not secret. The voters were offered the choice of two ballots: one was decorated with the Italian tricolor, which remained visible after the ballot had been folded, and was inscribed: "Do you approve of the list of deputies designated by the national Grand Council? Yes." The other was plain, and inscribed with the single word "No." Various subterfuges, it is claimed, were employed to intimidate those voters who attempted to cast a negative ballot.¹⁵ Of the 9,673,049 registered voters, 8,663,412 went to the polls, and 8,519,559 voted "yes," 135,761 voting "no."¹⁶

The new Chamber of Deputies, whose term expires in March 1934, was solemnly inaugurated by the King on April 20, 1929. On April 9 the Grand Council had declared that the Chamber, "corporative in origin, is political in character and has political functions." The Chamber, according to the Grand Council, has a two-fold task: it is to control all questions pertaining to the administration of the state, especially by means of budgetary discussion; and it is to collaborate in the preparation of bills introduced by the government or by individual deputies.¹⁷ Expulsion or suspension from the Fascist party automatically causes cessation or suspension of the parliamentary mandate. The rules of the Chamber, elaborated by Augusto Turati, then Secretary-General of the Fascist party, state that no questions which are not already on the

8. Haider, *Capital and Labor under Fascism*, cited, p. 255.

9. *Ibid.*, p. 256.

10. *Corriere della Sera*, March 14, 1929.

11. *Ibid.*, March 23, 1929.

12. Cf. V. M. Dean, "The Lateran Accord," *F. P. A. Information Service*, Vol. V, No. 9, July 10, 1929.

13. *Corriere della Sera*, March 9, 1929.

14. *Ibid.*, March 21, 1929.

15. Haider, *Capital and Labor under Fascism*, cited, p. 259-260; C. H. Abad, "Fascist Italy's Suppression of Free Thought," *Current History*, January 1931, p. 534.

16. Official *communiqué*, *Corriere della Sera*, March 31, 1929. The *communiqué* stated that 8,092 ballots had been nullified or contested.

17. *Communiqué* of the Press Office of the Fascist party, *Corriere della Sera*, April 9, 1929.

agenda can be discussed by the Chamber, except on proposal of the head of the government. Furthermore, *a priori* opposition to any proposed legislation is definitely eliminated. In practice, bills are first submitted by the head of the government to the Grand Council, examined by the Council of Ministers, and only then placed before the Chamber of Deputies. The Chamber may at that time "freely discuss the work of the government, not, of course, for the purpose of overthrowing it, but for the purpose of criticism and collaboration."¹⁸

Senate Opposition to the Electoral Law

The new electoral law met with strong opposition in the Senate. "It means going backward," said Senator Ruffini on May 12, 1928, "to take from the Italian people the right freely to choose their own representatives."¹⁹ Senator Albertini went further and denounced the absolutism of the Fascist government:

"The existence of an elective chamber does not suffice to take the absolute character from a régime, when the country is not allowed openly to fight . . . a régime which defends the captured position by such means as are used by Fascism. . . . The calling of elections has only a relative value when the executive power paralyzes the legislative power and where a situation is created in which but a single opinion is tolerated and regarded as worthy of respect, that of the government, that is, of the head of the government."²⁰

A resolution presented by Senator Ruffini and signed by forty-two Senators declared that the electoral law deprived the Italian people of the most essential of its rights, and one guaranteed by the constitution. This resolution was rejected by a vote of 161 to 46, and the law was finally adopted by the Senate.

Conflict of Views Regarding the Chamber of Deputies

Opponents of Fascism assert that the Chamber of Deputies has lost all significance, since it is merely the creature of the Grand Council, which is, in turn, a party as well as a government organ, and since any depu-

ties unfavorable to the régime may be removed by expulsion from the party. In their opinion, it would be more logical to abolish the Chamber altogether. The Fascist government, for its part, claims that the new electoral law eliminates agitation for personal or local advantages, and that the chamber, which represents the totality of the country's interests, is more truly "popular" than one elected by popular suffrage. The Fascists hope, in the future, to replace the present chamber, avowedly political in character, by an economic body representing producers grouped in corporations. Meanwhile, however, the "totalitarian" chamber is retained on the ground that "the modern state cannot ignore the masses, and that the government, if it must not depend on them, must nevertheless govern with them." Under this system, the vote becomes a means of ascertaining the voters' opinion concerning the political orientation of the government, and of maintaining a contact between the state and the population.²¹

THE SENATE

The Senate, according to the constitution, is composed of princes of the royal house, and an unlimited number of members nominated by the King from among twenty-one specified categories.²² The age and social position of the men appointed to the Senate generally have tended to make this body conservative in character. Despite this fact, the most consistent and determined opposition to the Fascist government has come from a group of some forty liberal Senators. Mussolini has always appealed to the higher wisdom and sense of responsibility of the Senate, emphasizing the danger of public disturbance should Fascism be overthrown.

21. *L'Organisation Syndicale et Corporative Italienne* (Rome, Imprimerie de la Chambre des Députés de Charles Colombo, 1930), p. 175-176.

22. These categories are as follows: 1) Archbishops and Bishops; 2) President of the Chamber of Deputies; 3) Deputies having served for six years or in three legislatures; 4) Ministers of State; 5) Ministers secretaries of State; 6) Ambassadors; 7) Envoys extraordinary having served three years; 8) First presidents and presidents of the Court of Cassation and the Court of Accounts; 9) First presidents of the Courts of Appeals; 10) The Attorney-General and Procurator-General; 11) Presidents of chambers of Courts of Appeals having served three years; 12) Counselors of the Court of Cassation and Court of Accounts; 13) Advocates and officials of public ministries (*fiscali generali*), having served five years; 14) Generals of army and navy; 15) Counselors of State having served five years; 16) Members of provincial councils; 17) Prefects; 18) Members of the Royal Academies; 19) Members of the Supreme Council of Public Instruction; 20) Those who, by their merits or services, have honored the fatherland; 21) Persons who, for three years, have paid three thousand lire in direct taxes. The total membership of the Senate in 1929 was 412.

18. Mussolini, speech in the Chamber of Deputies, December 8, 1928, *Corriere della Sera*, December 9, 1928.

19. Italy, *Atti Parlamentari della Camera dei Senatori, Legislatura XXVII, 1a Sessione 1924-1928, Discussioni* (Rome, Senate Printing Office, 1928), Vol. IX, p. 10244.

20. *Ibid.*, p. 10246.

Nevertheless, he has found the liberal Senators arrayed against him on such important measures as the electoral law, the law on the Grand Council and the Lateran Accord. This opposition has been materially curtailed by the recent absence from the Senate of outstanding opponents of Fascism such as Senators Luigi Albertini and Benedetto Croce. Various proposals have been made for a reform of the Senate, which, without displacing the present members, would transform the Senate into a body based on trade and professional affiliations and elected by corporations. No steps, however, have as yet been taken to effect this reform, and the wisdom of establishing a body which would duplicate the Chamber of Deputies is doubted in some quarters. The opposition encountered by Fascism in the Senate has had little practical effect on legislation. The government is assured of a majority and could, in any case, presumably obtain the necessary number of votes by appointing Fascist sympathizers to the Senate.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Centralization of power, which constitutes a basic policy of Fascism, has been applied to local government as well. By a law of April 3, 1926 the powers of the prefect were extended to all state activities within his province, with the exception of justice, war, marine and aeronautics. The prefect is regarded not merely as a civil servant, but as a collaborator of the Fascist government in the province,²³ and is charged with the task of preventing all demonstrations of opposition, especially in the press.²⁴ In the communes, which were formerly considered the cradle of local autonomy, and where Socialism had been strongly entrenched, the elective *syndic* (mayor) and municipal council have been replaced by a *podestà*, appointed by the government, and a council partly appointed by the prefect and partly elected by syndicates and other organizations. The *podestà* exercises both executive and legislative power, subject to strict control and surveillance on the part of the prefect and the provincial council. The functions of the municipal council are purely consultative.

Fascist spokesmen commend the reforms effected in provincial and municipal government on the ground that local party feuds and maladministration by elective officials have given way to unified, continuous and efficient administration. Opponents of Fascism deny that municipal government is either more honest or more efficient than in the past, and deplore the disappearance of autonomous communes which, in their opinion, offered the Italian people an opportunity to acquire experience in self-government.²⁵

THE FASCIST STATE AND INDIVIDUAL LIBERTY

It has already been pointed out that Fascism regards individual liberty not as a right, but as a concession on the part of the state; the latter reserves the right to impose what limitations it may see fit whenever the exercise of liberty by individuals or groups appears to threaten public order.²⁶ In accordance with this conception, the Fascist government has adopted a series of legislative measures dealing with public safety, the right of association and the press.

The law of January 31, 1926 provides that a citizen who commits abroad an act intended to disturb the public order of Italy, or injurious to Italian interests or prestige, shall lose his citizenship, even if the act in question does not constitute a crime (*delitto*). Loss of citizenship may be accompanied by sequestration or, in grave cases, confiscation of property.²⁷ This law was applied in 1926 to seventeen noted Italians then living abroad, including the historian Gaetano Salvemini, the former Fascist deputy Massimo Rocca and the Catholic-Democrat editor Giuseppe Donati.²⁸ No attempt has been made to apply the law since that time. A law of November 25, 1926, however, punishes by imprisonment of from five to ten years those citizens who spread false rumors abroad concerning the internal situation of Italy, or engage in activities contrary to national interests.²⁹

25. Cf. Ferrari, *Le Régime Fasciste Italien*, cited, p. 299.

26. Rocca, *The Political Doctrine of Fascism*, cited; Corso, *Lo Stato Fascista*, cited, p. 435.

27. *Gazzetta Ufficiale*, No. 28, February 4, 1926, p. 462.

28. Cf. *ibid.*, No. 243, October 19, 1926, p. 4623 *et seq.*, for decrees applying the law in each of these cases.

29. *Ibid.*, No. 281, December 6, 1926, p. 5314, Article 5.

23. Corso, *Lo Stato Fascista*, cited, p. 432-433.

24. Cf. p. 71.

Legislation Regarding Public Safety

The decree of November 6, 1926,³⁰ which covers all aspects of the question of public safety, provides that every citizen must be in possession of a *carta d'identità*. No person may emigrate without the permission of police authorities, and anyone who attempts to leave the country for political motives without a passport is subject to both fine and imprisonment. Persons accused of crimes against the state, or described as "ill-famed" (*diffamata*),³¹ and those regarded as dangerous to public order, may be "admonished" by an administrative commission, from whose verdict there is no appeal. "Admonished" persons must report all their movements to the police. The administrative commission may deport such persons, as well as those who have committed, or have "manifested a serious intention to commit," acts directed against the public order. Deportation for a period of from one to five years may be made to various points in Italy or to the colonies. Political prisoners must perform the tasks assigned to them, and must conduct themselves in a manner such as not "to give grounds for suspicion."³² It is estimated that, by 1927, 1,541 persons had been listed as "ill-famed," 959 had been "admonished" and 698 had been deported, chiefly to the penal colony situated on the Lipari islands, off the coast of Sicily.³³ The actual number of those affected by the law, however, is not definitely known, and opponents of Fascism claim that the government intentionally maintains uncertainty on this point in order to terrorize the population. Persons who have spent a term on the islands of Lipari claim that the physical hardships of deportation, considerable in themselves, are greatly increased by the moral ill-effects of imprisonment at the mercy of ignorant and often brutal police officials.³⁴ Moreover, even when released, the prisoners remain subject to police surveillance, and find it difficult to resume their former occupations.

30. *Gazzetta Ufficiale*, No. 257, November 8, 1926, p. 4822.

31. This description is applied to ordinary criminals.

32. These provisions of the decree of November 6, 1926 apply to ordinary criminals as well.

33. Ferrari, *Le Régime Fasciste Italien*, cited, p. 146. These figures were given by Mussolini May 26, 1927, *Discorsi del 1927*, cited, p. 114.

34. Cf. Francesco F. Nitti, *Escape* (New York, Putnam, 1930); Emilio Lussu, "Flight from Lipari," *Atlantic Monthly*, July 1930, p. 31.

The Fascist government justifies these measures on the ground that they constitute a "prophylactic treatment," necessary to remove diseased elements from the body politic.³⁵ In presenting the decree on the defense of the state to the Chamber of Deputies, Rocco, Minister of Justice, stated that the enemies of Fascism, defeated on the political field, had sought refuge in the sphere of crime, and must be fought in that sphere on their own terms.

The Law on Secret Associations

According to Fascist theory, no groups or organizations, whether political or economic, can exist outside the framework of the state. The law of November 26, 1925,³⁶ directed primarily against Freemasonry, therefore provides that all associations in Italy and the colonies must communicate to the police their charters, statutes and internal regulations, the list of their members and activities, and any other information which may be requested by the authorities in the interest of order and security. An association which fails to submit such a declaration, or which furnishes false or incomplete data, may be dissolved by the prefect. Civil and military employees are required to declare whether they have ever belonged in the past to associations of any kind. Judges, administrative officials, university professors, teachers in secondary schools and persons employed in the ministries of Foreign Affairs, the Interior and the Colonies cannot become members of professional organizations.³⁷ Students may not organize associations for the protection of their interests.³⁸ Finally, the reconstitution of parties or associations dissolved by the government is punishable by imprisonment of from three to ten years. Membership in such associations, and propaganda of their doctrines by any means whatsoever, is punishable as a crime.

The essential features of the law of November 26, 1925 on secret associations are reproduced in the penal code adopted by the

35. Mussolini, speech in Chamber of Deputies, May 26, 1927, *Discorsi del 1927*, cited, p. 118.

36. *Gazzetta Ufficiale*, No. 277, November 28, 1925, p. 4714.

37. Law of April 3, 1926; cf. p. 76.

38. Law of July 1, 1926; cf. p. 76.

Fascist government in 1931, which provides various terms of imprisonment for those who form associations prohibited by the government, or attempt to spread their doctrines. In addition, those who form an association "having an international character" without the authorization of the government, or join similar associations abroad, are punishable by a fine or six months' imprisonment.

The law of November 26, 1925 was sharply attacked in the Senate by a minority which claimed that it constituted a violation of the fundamental rights of the Italian people. Several Senators who approved of the law in general, objected to the provision making it obligatory for civil employees to declare whether they had previously participated in secret societies. This provision, as a matter of fact, was allowed to remain in abeyance, after it was discovered that its strict enforcement would implicate a number of Fascists.

THE SPECIAL TRIBUNAL FOR THE DEFENSE OF THE STATE

By the law of November 25, 1926,³⁹ certain political crimes, notably the reconstitution of parties and associations dissolved by the government, were removed from the jurisdiction of ordinary courts and submitted to the newly created Special Tribunal for the Defense of the State.⁴⁰ This tribunal is composed of a president chosen from among officers of the army, navy, air-force or militia, and five judges selected from officers holding the rank of consul (colonel) in the militia. During the preliminaries of the trial, the president may forbid the inspection of documents, cognizance of which "may be detrimental to the public interest." The president, at the request of the public prosecutor, or if he thinks it necessary "in the public interest," may exclude non-military counsel. At the trial in October 1930 of a group of Slovenes accused of throwing a bomb on the premises of a Fascist newspaper in Trieste, counsel for the defense, who was appointed by the president of the court, declared that his clients "were in a terrible

position, and that a death sentence would be the proper thing."⁴¹ At the trial of the group known as "Alleanza Nazionale"⁴² on December 22, 1930 the president of the Special Tribunal interrupted the proceedings to denounce the defendants as "liars" and "worms" unworthy of mercy. Foreign correspondents are usually excluded from these trials, while Italian newspapers publish official *communiqués* issued by the government. No appeal can be taken from the verdict of the Special Tribunal, although the sentence may be reviewed if fresh evidence showing the innocence of the condemned has been collected in the meantime. The King, moreover, may exercise his prerogative of reprieve if the commander of the prison consents to forward the petition of the condemned. In the case of the Trieste Slovenes, the commander failed to do this, and the men were executed twenty-four hours following the close of the trial.

The Special Tribunal for the Defense of the State is unreservedly condemned by opponents of Fascism as an organ of party, as contrasted with state, justice.⁴³ Fascist spokesmen, for their part, defend the tribunal as an institution essential for the preservation of public order; they claim that "the rapidity and rigor" of its procedure "give the most certain guarantee of the equity, and, at the same time, rigor of the decisions."⁴⁴

THE FASCIST GOVERNMENT AND THE PRESS

The sole function of the press in the Fascist state is that of collaboration with the government. After the March on Rome the Italian press, which had always served as the principal source of information on political subjects, was outspokenly critical of Fascism, and exercised considerable influence, especially in the industrial centres of the North. The "fourth estate" was denounced by Fascist spokesmen on the ground that it made irresponsible use of its undisputed powers. The Fascist press, however, lacked journalistic talent, and could not compete with liberal and socialist organs for the

39. *Gazzetta Ufficiale*, No. 281, December 6, 1926, p. 5314.

40. This law was supplemented by a decree of December 12, 1926.

41. *Corriere della Sera*, September 6, 1930.

42. Cf. p. 79.

43. Ferrari, *Le Régime Fasciste Italien*, cited, p. 130.

44. *Ibid.*, p. 131.

attention of the public." Following the murder of Matteotti, the anti-Fascist press became virulent in its attacks on the government, and various restrictions were gradually imposed on it, culminating in the law of December 31, 1925, which brought the press under government control.⁴⁵ This law, supplemented by the regulations of March 4, 1926 and the decree of February 28, 1928, provides that a responsible director, approved by the government, must be in charge of all periodical publications. Only journalists whose names appear on a special register kept by regional Fascist syndicates of journalists, may contribute to newspapers or periodicals, and no persons who have engaged in "public activity contrary to the interest of the nation" can be so listed. Properly registered publications are thereafter subject to supervision by the prefect, who may sequester them at any time. After a certain number of sequestrations, the prefect may issue a "warning" (*diffida*), and two such "warnings" may be followed by suspension or even suppression of the offending newspaper. The law provides that an appeal from the decision of the prefect may be taken to the Ministry of Justice. Measures adopted against opposition newspapers, however, have generally not been followed by court proceedings.

The rigorous application of the press laws dealt a sharp blow to the circulation and, consequently, the finances of independent newspapers, which have been forced or persuaded, one by one, to sell out to Fascist interests. *Il Corriere della Sera* (Milan), formerly directed by Senator Albertini, retains the largest circulation, and is distinguished by the literary quality of its contributions. *Il Popolo d'Italia* (Milan), founded by Mussolini in 1914 as a Socialist organ, is now directed by his brother, Arnaldo Mussolini, and may be regarded as a mouthpiece of the government. For the most part Fascist editorials are simply variations on the theme of the day, as expressed by Mussolini. Intolerance of all but official opinion has reduced the Italian press to a uniform level of monotony. In view of the strict censorship,

greater credence is often given by the population to rumor and gossip than to published news. Foreign correspondents are likewise subject to censorship. All cables and radio messages pass through the Ministry of the Interior, and while messages may not always be deleted, their transmission is considerably delayed.⁴⁶

THE FASCIST MILITIA

The maintenance of public order is entrusted by the Fascist government to the Voluntary Militia for National Security (*Milizia Volontaria per la Sicurezza Nazionale*), organized on January 14, 1923. The militia was originally composed of the squads of Black Shirts which participated in the March on Rome, and one of the "quadrumvirs," General De Bono, was appointed Commander-General.⁴⁷ It was expected that these irregular troops would be disbanded by the Fascist government once it had come to power. Mussolini, however, claimed that the disbandment of the Black Shirts would not only constitute an act of ingratitude to his followers, but might lead to violence and disorder, especially in regions remote from the capital. He decided, therefore, to regularize the status of the Black Shirts by creating the militia.

The "voluntary militia," which now numbers over 300,000 men, constitutes a part of the armed forces of the state, and is directly under the orders of the head of the government, who acts as its Commander-General. Following the excitement created by the Matteotti affair, it was decreed on August 4, 1924 that the militia should take an oath of loyalty to the King, and this was done on the second anniversary of the March on Rome, October 28, 1924. At first no restrictions were placed on the political affiliations of members of the militia. In October 1930, however, the Grand Council adopted a regulation which provided that all mem-

47. Cf. Ralph W. Barnes, special article on conditions in Italy, *New York Herald Tribune*, March 5, 1931.

48. Estimates of the number of men enrolled in Fascist squads in October 1922 vary considerably. Villari estimates the total number at 300,000 (Villari, *The Fascist Experiment*, cited, p. 163). Mussolini has stated that 52,000 actually participated in the March on Rome, and entered the city. Salvemini questions the latter figure, and asserts that there were only 8,000 Black Shirts in Rome on October 28, 1922. Fascist supporters adopted the uniform worn by the *Arditi* (shock troops) towards the close of the war, which included a black shirt.

45. Villari, *The Fascist Experiment*, cited, p. 210.

46. *Gazzetta Ufficiale*, No. 3, January 5, 1926, p. 22.

bers of the militia must be enrolled in the Fascist party." Service in the militia is voluntary; with the exception of the permanent general staff, the officers and men are paid only for days of actual service, and are not required to live in barracks. In case of mobilization, the members of the militia are to be incorporated in units of the armed forces. The organization of the militia is modeled on that of the Roman legions, and consists of legions, cohorts, centuries and maniples.

Functions of the Militia

The object of the militia, as set forth by the Grand Council on January 14, 1923, is "to safeguard the inevitable and inexorable development of the October [1922] revolution." Its duties are those of a political police. The militia is charged with the task of preventing "every disturbance of public order, every gesture or attempt at sedition against the Fascist government," thereby assuring "constant normalcy in the productive and social life of the nation."⁵⁰ Ordinary police activities and the repression of common delinquency are left to the police. The militia is assigned to railways, ports, postal and telegraph offices, and to duty in the

colonies, notably in Libya. The cost of the militia, estimated at 40,000,000 lire in 1929, is defrayed by the Ministry of the Interior. This sum, however, does not include the money expended on the militia of railways and ports, which is charged to the budget of the Ministry of Communications, nor the cost of the Libyan militia, borne by the Ministry for the Colonies.

Opponents of Fascism denounce the militia as a partisan body, designed to enforce Fascist rule by force, and demand either its abolition or its absorption into the regular army. The Fascist government, however, regards the militia as an instrument indispensable to the maintenance of public order.

In addition to the militia, the Fascist government has established a secret police, known as the O. V. R. A. (*Organizzazione Vigilanza Reati Antifascisti*),⁵¹ directly under the orders of the Ministry of the Interior, which is headed by Mussolini. The activities of this police became known to the public for the first time in an official *communiqué* of December 4, 1930, which stated that the O. V. R. A. had disclosed the existence of three anti-Fascist organizations which had for some time been conducting criminal activities against the régime.⁵²

THE ECONOMIC STRUCTURE OF THE FASCIST STATE

The development of industry in Northern Italy in the first decade of the present century was accompanied by the emergence of a new social class, the industrial proletariat. The Italian workers, employed chiefly in small-scale industries, were for the most part poorly paid and inadequately organized. The Socialist party, which had at first drawn its strength from the small bourgeoisie and the intellectuals, now attempted to improve the economic condition of the proletariat by organizing the workers in socialist labor unions, the most important of which was the General Confederation of Labor. A similar

attempt to solve the social and economic problems of industrialization was made by the Catholic labor unions. Meanwhile, the syndicalist movement, which had originated in France, and had been elaborated into a philosophic system by Georges Sorel, made considerable headway in Italy. Syndicalism conceives of society as a decentralized union of federated and self-governing industries, the basic unit of which is the syndicate, an organization of producers free to manage its own affairs. The syndicalists oppose existing forms of government which, they claim, merely serve to perpetuate social injustice, and advocate their overthrow by means of the general strike.⁵³

The outcome of the World War and the establishment of the Soviet government

49. *Corriere della Sera*, October 21, 1930. The regular (conscription) Italian army numbers 364,570 men. The militia is responsible for preparatory military training in accordance with the rules and regulations issued by the Ministry of War under the supervision of the latter and of the territorial military authorities.

50. Partito Nazionale Fascista, *Il Gran Consiglio nei Primi Cinqui Anni dell' Era Fascista*, cited, p. 69.

51. Organization for Surveillance of Anti-Fascist Crimes.

52. *Corriere della Sera*, December 5, 1930. For the activities and trial of members of these organizations, cf. section on opposition to Fascism, p. 79.

53. Georges Sorel, *Réflexions sur la Violence*, 5th ed. (Paris, Rivière, 1921). Sorel himself regarded the general strike as a convenient "myth," not as a practical solution. *Ibid.*, p. 177 et seq.

strengthened the syndicalist elements in the Socialist party, which demanded the organization of a general strike and the overthrow of the government. It is estimated that in 1920 there were 1,881 industrial strikes, in which 1,267,953 workers were engaged, and 189 agricultural strikes, involving 1,045,732 workers. In 1921 the number of industrial strikes had been reduced to 1,045, and that of agricultural strikes to 522. A further improvement took place in 1922, when 89 industrial strikes, supported by 79,298 workers, and 23 agricultural strikes, involving 25,146 workers, took place.⁵⁴ In 1920, when the metallurgical industrialists in Lombardy and Piedmont refused to raise wages and threatened a lockout, the workers first planned to declare a general strike, and then proceeded to occupy the factories. The government, adhering to the liberal policy of *laissez-faire*, made no attempt to interfere in these conflicts between workers and industrialists, which served to dislocate the economic life of the country, already greatly impaired by the war.⁵⁵

EARLY HISTORY OF FASCIST SYNDICATES

The program of the Fascist party, adopted in 1922, provided for the establishment of "corporations,"⁵⁶ which were intended to be an expression of national solidarity as well as a means of developing production. The Fascist congress of Bologna, January 24, 1922, created "national corporations," which were defined as "national organizations consisting of combinations of the various provincial syndicates interested in the same kind of labor and industry." The supreme organ of this system, the National Confederation of Syndicate Corporations, declared that the nation, "considered as a supreme synthesis of all material and spiritual values of the race," stands above individuals, groups and classes," and repudiated the idea of the class struggle. It has been claimed that at that time Fascism favored syndicalism not as a means of improving the economic position of the workers, but as a

method of organizing the labor elements within its own ranks.⁵⁷

On his advent to power, Mussolini declared that the Fascist government would undertake the "guardianship" of all economic interests of the nation, would tolerate no conflicts between workers and employers resulting in an interruption of the country's productive life, and would not favor one group at the expense of the other.⁵⁸ The Fascist state, he said, rejected the *laissez-faire* policy of the "agnostic" liberal state, and would henceforth interfere whenever economic conflicts threatened to impair national interests.

The Fascist syndicates did not at first attract industrial workers, the majority of whom remained affiliated with Socialist and Catholic labor unions. The government, having failed to reach an understanding with the General Confederation of Labor, proceeded to adopt a series of measures directed at the elimination of all but Fascist syndicates. The Gentile Commission of Fifteen, appointed in 1925 to study the question of constitutional reform, was unanimously in favor of the legal recognition of syndicates; it declared, however, that the state could not recognize syndicates which, for their part, failed to recognize the state, followed aims contrary to the interests of the nation, or were affiliated with international labor organizations. The latter provision, while permitting the existence of Catholic labor organizations, excluded the possibility of granting recognition to Socialist labor unions. In December 1925 the National Confederation of Fascist Syndicates⁵⁹ demanded that Fascist syndicates be recognized as the sole representatives of the workers. At the invitation of Mussolini, a meeting of Fascist workers' organizations and representatives of employers was held at the Palazzo Vidoni on October 25, 1925, when a pact was concluded whereby the employers recognized Fascist syndicates as the workers' sole representatives. The "Pact of Palazzo Vidoni" was denounced by the General Con-

54. Haider, *Capitalism and Labor under Fascism*, cited, p. 25.

55. Bonomi, *Dal Socialismo al Fascismo*, cited; Salvemini, *The Fascist Dictatorship in Italy*, cited; Sturzo, *Italy and Fascism*, cited.

56. Until 1925 the Fascists used the expression "corporation" to describe a national federation of syndicates.

57. Haider, *Capitalism and Labor under Fascism*, cited, p. 57.

58. Mussolini, speech in the Chamber of Deputies, November 16, 1922. Cf. *Discorsi della Rivoluzione*, cited, p. 101-102.

59. It had replaced the earlier General Confederation of Fascist Syndicates.

federation of Labor on the ground that it was contrary to the interests of the workers. It became law, nevertheless, on November 25, 1925, when the employers recognized that Fascist labor organizations had the exclusive right to represent the workers.⁶⁰ The Fascist organization of syndicates was finally established by the law of April 3, 1926, supplemented by a decree of July 1, 1926, while the relations of workers and employers with each other and with the state were defined by the Charter of Labor, promulgated on April 21, 1927.

THE CHARTER OF LABOR

The Charter of Labor⁶¹ has been described as the constitution of a new, corporate Italian society.⁶² It declares that the nation is an organism having ends, life and means superior to those of the separate individuals or groups which compose it. The nation is a moral, political and economic unity integrally realized in the Fascist state. Labor in all forms, intellectual, technical and manual, is regarded as a social duty and, as such, is to be safeguarded by the state. The process of production is unitary from the national point of view, and its aims are summed up in the welfare of the producers and the growth of the national power.

Professional or syndical organization is free; only those syndicates, however, which are recognized and controlled by the state have the right to represent the category of workers or employers for which they are established. The conflict of interests between workers and employers is recognized, but must be subordinated to the higher interests of production, and regulated by means of collective labor contracts.

The Charter of Labor regards private initiative in the field of production as the most effective and useful instrument for the achievement of national ends. Private organization or production, however, is a national function, and organizers of various enterprises are therefore responsible to the

state. The latter intervenes in production only when private initiative is lacking or insufficient, or when its political interests are at stake. Such intervention may assume the form of control, encouragement or direct management.

In addition to this general declaration, the Charter of Labor sets forth the broad principles which are to govern the conclusion of collective labor contracts, the establishment of employment agencies, and various measures for the education and insurance of the workers.⁶³

FASCIST SYNDICATES

The basic unit of the Fascist corporate system is the syndicate. The state recognizes only one syndicate for each territorial unit (commune, province, region) and in each professional category of workers or employers. Syndicates of employers and workers must always be separate; mixed syndicates are not accorded recognition. A syndicate is recognized when it contains ten per cent of the workers engaged in a given kind of work or, in the case of employers, when its members give work to at least ten per cent of the workers engaged in that industry; when, in addition to economic activities, it undertakes the assistance, instruction, moral and political education of its members; and when its directors give a guarantee of ability, morality and strong patriotic convictions. The percentage of membership was set at a relatively low figure on the ground that Italian labor is as yet inadequately organized, especially in the agrarian South, and that the adoption of a higher figure would have hampered the establishment of syndicates for certain categories of workers.⁶⁴ Membership in syndicates is open to all citizens who have reached the age of eighteen, and have always given evidence of "good moral and political conduct from the national point of view."⁶⁵

Recognition of a professional association is effected by royal decree, on proposal of the competent minister; the same decree approves the statutes of the association, which must be published at its expense in

60. For a detailed study of this period, cf. Haider, *Capitalism and Labor under Fascism*, cited.

61. *Gazzetta Ufficiale*, No. 100, April 30, 1927, p. 1794.

62. *L'Organisation Syndicale et Corporative Italienne*, cited, p. 25. For interpretations of the Charter of Labor, cf. Augusto Turati and Giuseppe Bottai, *La Carta del Lavoro* (Rome, "Il Diritto del Lavoro," 1929); Giuseppe Bottai, *Esperienza Corporativa* (Rome, "Il Diritto del Lavoro," 1929).

63. The Fascist laws on education and insurance will be examined in a forthcoming *Foreign Policy Report*.

64. *L'Organisation Syndicale et Corporative*, cited, p. 53.

65. Law of April 3, 1926, Regarding the Legal Regulation of Collective Relations of Labor, *Gazzetta Ufficiale*, No. 87, April 14, 1926, p. 1590; decree of July 1, 1926, *ibid.*, No. 155, July 7, 1926, p. 2930, Article 1.

the *Gazzetta Ufficiale del Regno d'Italia*. Recognition is refused whenever it appears inopportune for reasons of a political, economic or social nature.⁶⁶ Under no circumstances can recognition be accorded to associations in any way connected with international organizations.

Functions of the Fascist Syndicates

The recognized syndicate has legal personality, and represents all persons in the category for which it is established, whether members or not. It has the right to conclude collective labor contracts, to charge syndical dues, to discipline its own members, and to appear before labor courts on their behalf. Only regularly enrolled members, however, may participate in the activities of the syndicate.

In addition to the recognized legal syndicates, the law permits the organization of *de facto* associations by various professions; these associations, however, enjoy none of the rights or privileges conferred on recognized syndicates. Associations of civil employees are subject to special regulation, and are directly controlled by the Fascist party.⁶⁷ The organization of professional associations by members of the armed forces, magistrates, university professors, teachers

in secondary schools, employees and agents of the Ministries of the Interior, Foreign Affairs and the Colonies, and students, is strictly prohibited.⁶⁸

The syndicates, following recognition, are subject to the control of the prefect, if their activities are restricted to the boundaries of one province, or to that of the Ministry of Corporations, if they cover two or more provinces. Ten per cent of the dues charged by each syndicate is set aside as its contribution to the expenses of the Ministry of Corporations.

The National Confederations of Fascist Syndicates

The various syndicates in each category may be grouped into provincial and regional federations and into national confederations. The law recognizes six confederations respectively for employers and workers in the following fields of production: industry, agriculture, maritime and aerial transportation, land transportation and inland navigation, commerce, and banking.⁶⁹ In addition to these twelve confederations, provision is made for a national confederation of professional men and artists. The following table shows the number of persons enrolled in and represented by the National Confederations of Fascist Syndicates in 1928.⁷⁰

MEMBERSHIP IN FASCIST SYNDICATES

	EMPLOYERS		EMPLOYEES	
	<i>Represented</i>	<i>Enrolled</i>	<i>Represented</i>	<i>Enrolled</i>
National Fascist Confederation of Italian Industry ..	120,824	71,453	2,544,009	1,218,207
National Fascist Confederation of Agriculture	3,203,080	314,658	4,699,333	1,021,461
National Fascist Confederation of Commerce	805,661	360,000	908,400	346,931
National Fascist Confederation of Land Transportation and Inland Navigation	39,518	18,190	201,597	157,914
National Fascist Confederation of Banking	3,770	2,931	55,182	33,506
National Fascist Confederation of Air and Maritime Transportation	1,820	631	552,841	67,387
National Fascist Confederation of Professional Men and Artists	422,662	206,000	143,940	76,402
TOTAL	4,597,335	973,863	9,105,302	2,921,808

The law envisages the eventual establishment of liaison organs, which will be known as corporations (*corporazioni*), between the workers' and employers' organizations in each professional category.⁷¹ These are to

be constituted by the Ministry of Corporations and to serve as organs of state administration. The future development of Italy's economic organization is expected to deter-

66. Decree of July 1, 1926, Article 13.

67. *Foglio d'Ordini*, December 1, 1930; *Corriere della Sera*, January 26, 1931.

68. Law of April 3, 1926, Article 11; decree of July 1, 1926, Article 94.

69. Royal decree of July 1, 1926 regarding the application of the law of April 3, 1926, Article 41.

70. This table is based on the latest available figures, supplied by the Italy America Society, 745 Fifth Avenue, New York City.

71. Cf. law of April 3, 1926, Article 3, and decree of July 1, 1926, Chapter III.

mine the functions of these corporations. They would be charged with the task of effecting a reconciliation in labor disputes before these reach the labor courts, and would supervise the execution of labor laws. In addition, they would coordinate all efforts to improve the organization of production, and would direct the activities of national and regional labor bureaus. At present, however, they are as yet only under discussion.

The National Council of Corporations

The corporations, when formed, will be represented on the National Council of Corporations, established in 1930.⁷² This council, convoked by the head of the government, who acts as its president, is composed of representatives of syndical and other organizations, as well as members of the cabinet and secretaries of the Fascist party. It is a coordinating and consultative body, charged with the task of achieving unity in national production, and ranks with the Grand Council and the Chamber of Deputies as a supreme organ of the state.⁷³ The council is divided into seven sections, corresponding to the seven fields of production covered by the national confederations of syndicates (industry, agriculture, commerce, banking, maritime and aerial transportation, land transportation and inland navigation, liberal professions and arts). By a decree of February 4, 1931 the functions which will eventually be entrusted to these corporations were vested in the seven sections of the National Council of Corporations. The function of conciliation in labor disputes, however, is to be exercised, as in the past, by the Ministry of Corporations.⁷⁴

The Ministry of Corporations

The body which actually regulates and coordinates the work of the syndicates and supervises the development of national production is the Ministry of Corporations, established in 1926. The expenditures of this ministry are partly included in the state budget, and partly paid from a special fund constituted by the contributions of syndi-

cates. In 1926-1927 the state expended 806,830 lire for the Ministry of Corporations; this sum was reduced to 166,913 lire in 1927-1928.⁷⁵

The corporate economic structure of the Fascist state is articulated with the political structure by means of two important constitutional organs, the Chamber of Deputies and the Grand Council. As has already been pointed out, 800 of the 1,000 candidates to the Chamber of Deputies submitted to the scrutiny of the Grand Council are nominated by the thirteen National Confederations of Fascist Syndicates. Furthermore, the National Confederations of Fascist Syndicates for Industry and Agriculture are represented on the Grand Council by their respective presidents. The Fascist government hopes eventually to complete the corporate organization of the state by transforming the Chamber of Deputies into a strictly economic body representing the interests of various groups of producers. Meanwhile, however, fear is expressed by certain Fascists that the political functions of the state have become unduly subordinated to its economic functions. Giuseppe Bottai, Minister of Corporations, has recently stated that this fear is largely unfounded, since both political and economic interests are subject to the control of the state.⁷⁶

COLLECTIVE LABOR CONTRACTS

The recognized syndicate alone has the right to conclude collective labor contracts, which are applicable to all persons in the category it represents, whether members or not. These contracts are binding in all cases, except when the terms of a contract made by an individual worker with his employer are more favorable than those of a collective contract. The Charter of Labor provides that each collective contract must cover the subjects of labor discipline, period of probation, scale and payment of wages, hours of work, vacations, and conditions of dismissal.⁷⁷ No minimum wage is established by the Charter of Labor, which declares that

75. Haider, *Capital and Labor under Fascism*, cited, p. 147. The Ministry of Corporations publishes a bulletin, *Bollettino Ufficiale*, and a monthly review, *Il Diritto del Lavoro*.

76. Giuseppe Bottai, "L'Ordinamento Corporativo, Ordinamento Politico," *Critica Fascista*, February 1, 1931, p. 41.

77. Articles XI-XXI. The scale of wages and standard of living of Italian workers will be discussed in a forthcoming *Foreign Policy Report*.

72. Cf. *Gazzetta Ufficiale*, No. 74, March 28, 1930.

73. Cf. "Il Consiglio delle Corporazioni," *Corriere della Sera*, September 25, 1929; Report of Giuseppe Bottai, Minister of Corporations, regarding the law on the National Council of Corporations. *Ibid.*, November 23, 1929.

74. *Corriere della Sera*, February 5, 1931.

wages in all cases must be determined by collective contracts. The government undertakes to collect and publish statistical data on conditions of work and production, the situation of the financial market and variations in the standard of living of the workers, which may serve as a criterion for the determination of wages.

Collective contracts must be made in writing, approved by the Ministry of Corporations and published. Workers and employers are legally responsible for the fulfillment of the contracts, and may be punished by a fine in case of violation. The respective syndicates likewise are responsible when they have guaranteed the execution of a contract, or have failed to do everything in their power to insure its application.⁷⁸ It is estimated at present that some 150 national and inter-provincial contracts have been concluded for such categories as commercial employees, metallurgical workers, chemists, journalists, dramatic and lyric artists, cement workers, bank employees, workers in automobile factories, and others. In addition, over 3,000 contracts of narrower territorial application have been concluded since 1926.⁷⁹ The largest number of contracts have been made in industry, which is more highly organized than other branches of production, notably agriculture.⁸⁰

Fascism, as has already been pointed out, repudiates the idea of the class struggle. Measures of class self-defense, such as strikes and lockouts, are therefore strictly prohibited, and are subject to punishment by heavy fines. Should strikes and lockouts involve recourse to force, the participants may be condemned to imprisonment. Organizers of strikes and lockouts are in all cases subject to imprisonment for a period of from one to two years. Suspension of public services is regarded as a crime against the state. In addition to telephone, telegraph, railways, gas, water and other necessities of modern life, public services are made to include the work of physicians, lawyers, engineers, architects, land surveyors and agricultural experts.⁸¹

78. Law of April 3, 1926 and decree of July 1, 1926.

79. *L'Organisation Syndicale et Corporative Italienne*, cited, p. 108.

80. Bottai, *Esperienza Corporativa*, cited, p. 210.

81. Decree of July 1, 1926, Article 98.

LABOR COURTS

Workers and employers are obliged to resort to the procedure of conciliation or to the courts for the settlement of their conflicts. The Ministry of Corporations must always attempt to effect a reconciliation between opposing groups of workers and employers. Only when this procedure has failed can the dispute be submitted to a special section of one of Italy's sixteen courts of appeals, acting as a labor court. This section is composed of three magistrates and two citizens acquainted with the technical aspects of labor and production.

The labor courts have jurisdiction over all collective, as distinguished from individual, conflicts between workers and employers. They are empowered to apply the rules of collective contracts and, in the absence of such contracts, to establish norms for the regulation of labor conditions. The Ministry of Corporations always appears before the labor courts with the representatives of workers and employers. The verdicts of the labor courts are binding, and employers or workers who refuse to abide by them are subject to fine and imprisonment. Individual labor conflicts must be submitted to ordinary courts, assisted by two experts, one selected from the employers and one from the workers.⁸²

The majority of collective labor conflicts have so far been settled without recourse to the labor courts, either by special conciliation commissions provided for in certain collective contracts, or by the Ministry of Corporations. Only two cases of national importance have been submitted to the labor courts. The first, decided on July 28, 1927, involved the interpretation of a contract regarding the remuneration of workers in rice fields. The second, decided on January 28, 1928, concerned the interpretation of a contract establishing the scale of wages for workers in maritime transportation. In both cases decision was in favor of the workers. The labor courts, while directly subject to the control of the government, are, in general, regarded as impartial by both workers and employers.⁸³

82. Decree of February 28, 1928, Regarding the Settlement of Individual Labor Conflicts.

83. Halder, *Capital and Labor under Fascism*, cited, p. 206.

CRITICISM OF FASCIST LABOR POLICY

The general criticism directed against the syndical and corporative organization established by the Fascist government is that it replaces the free association of workers for the defense of their legitimate interests by a highly bureaucratized system subject to the control of the state which, in turn, is ruled by a single political party. Anti-Fascists assert that the practical exclusion of all but legally recognized syndicates from participation in the economic life of the country forces both workers and employers to join these syndicates, irrespective of the views they may hold regarding Fascism. Collective labor contracts, it is argued, tend to perpetuate, rather than improve, existing conditions of work, and to reduce the status of all workers, whatever their ability, to the same economic level. Critics of Fascism claim, moreover, that the labor courts in no sense achieve the practical results formerly attained by means of labor agitation and strikes, since their verdicts are dictated by Fascist interests, which do not necessarily coincide with those of the workers. Finally, it is claimed that the Fascist syndical organization, highly centralized and subject to close supervision by government organs, prevents the development of leadership on the part of the workers, and thus places them at a dis-

advantage in the class struggle which may eventually take place.⁸⁴

Fascist spokesmen, for their part, are of the opinion that no organizations, economic or political, can exist outside the state, and that therefore only Fascist syndicates should be permitted to participate in the regulation of production. Fascism prides itself on having transformed the syndical association, "critical and polemical in character," into a public institution devoted to national ends.⁸⁵ The interests of workers and employers, according to Fascism, must never threaten the economic equilibrium of the state, and syndical organization is justified on the ground that it maintains a just balance between the two groups. Fascism does not deny the existence of conflicts between workers and employers. It believes, however, that such conflicts, when permitted to develop, may cause incalculable injury to the state, and that they must in all cases be settled by resort not to violence, but to conciliation and judicial procedure. The class struggle, said Mussolini in 1923, is a luxury which a poor country like Italy cannot afford. He believes that only a long period of social peace will enable the country to overcome its natural inferiority: "Without this, we shall be irrevocably lost in the field of international competition."⁸⁶

OPPOSITION TO FASCISM

The opponents of Fascism in Italy—Liberals, Democratic Catholics, Socialists, Communists, Freemasons—have been effectively silenced by their exclusion from Parliament and by the restrictions imposed on the right of association and the freedom of the press. Any attempt to reconstitute the old political parties or create new ones is subject to severe punishment. "No tolerance, no indulgence," said Arpinati, Under-Secretary of the Interior on March 3, 1931, "will be conceded to those who, after nine years of the régime and after the titanic work accomplished by *Il Duce*, insist on regarding the Fascist revolution as a transitional episode."⁸⁷

The Fascist press, which is uniformly laudatory, gives the impression that the entire population endorses the Fascist program without reservations or qualifications. Nevertheless, from time to time, official *communiqués* reveal the existence of some anti-Fascist plot, and indicate that the culprits will be tried by the Special Tribunal for the Defense of the State. Three such plots were recently uncovered by the secret police (O. V. R. A.), one of which involved a Communist organization, while another concerned the National Alliance (*Alleanza Nazionale*). The latter had been founded in June 1930 by a young writer, Lauro De

84. For a critique of the Fascist system, cf. *ibid.*

85. *L'Organisation Syndicale et Corporative Italienne*, cited, p. 159.

86. Speech of December 20, 1923, cf. *La Nuova Politica*, cited, p. 136.

87. *Il Giornale d'Italia*, March 4, 1931.

Bosis, formerly associated with the *Casa Italiana* in New York; its leading members were his mother, Signora De Bosis, an American by birth, and two prominent journalists, Mario Vinciguerra and Renzo Rendi. This group circulated a bulletin, for the most part written by Lauro De Bosis, who resided abroad. These bulletins were mimeographed by Signora De Bosis, and mailed to a list of persons, each of whom was requested to type six copies, and send them to six persons, always the same, at least two of whom were to be Fascists. The articles published in this bulletin invited patriotic Italians to unite against Fascism under the leadership of the monarchy and the Church, and thus prevent monopolization of anti-Fascist opposition by the Communists. "Today," said the bulletin of July 15, 1930, "the National Alliance includes men of all non-subversive parties and can have only one enemy, Fascism."⁸⁸

At the trial of the "Alleanza Nazionale" on December 22, 1930, the prosecutor accused its members of having represented the Church and the monarchy as antagonistic to the régime. Vinciguerra admitted that the bulletins were critical of Fascism, but denied that they advocated recourse to violence. The president of the tribunal interrupted him at this point and described the articles in the bulletins as "lies." Signora De Bosis, who had written Mussolini a letter from prison, expressing penitence for her action and admiration for the Fascist government, was pardoned, while Vinciguerra and Rendi were condemned to fifteen years' imprisonment.⁸⁹

ANTI-FASCIST TENDENCIES IN ITALY

It is the opinion of competent observers that there is little prospect at the present time of a violent overthrow of the Fascist government. Dissatisfaction with the government is found chiefly among industrialists and professional men. The industrialists, forced to maintain a prescribed scale of

wages in the face of economic depression, accuse Fascism of undue leniency towards the workers. In general, however, the propertied classes, which welcomed Fascism in 1922 in the hope that it would restore public order, fear that the only alternative today would be a return to revolutionary Socialism. Intellectuals and professional men, for their part, oppose restrictions on the liberty of association and of the press, and complain of Italy's intellectual stagnation under Fascism. Here again, however, there seem to be no signs of concerted action. The workers, on the whole, appear to have benefited by recent social reforms, and with the exception of the Communists are either favorable or indifferent to Fascism. Finally, the opposition of the Church, which might have proved a serious obstacle, was in large part removed by the conclusion of the Lateran Accord in 1929. Nevertheless, the Pope has occasionally criticized Fascism for the liberty accorded to Protestant sects, and the *Osservatore Romano*, now published on Vatican territory, is the only Italian newspaper which takes issue with the government.

MUSSOLINI'S PERSONAL INFLUENCE

The absence of any widespread active opposition may be attributed, in part, to the political indifference of the population. In larger measure, however, it appears to be due to the admiration with which Mussolini is regarded in many circles otherwise opposed to Fascism. The fact that Mussolini enjoys so great a degree of personal prestige has caused considerable speculation concerning the effects which may be produced by his disappearance. The Fascist party has been frequently divided on major questions of policy, the older, conservative elements advocating closer cooperation with capitalism, and the former socialists demanding radical reforms for the benefit of the workers. Until now Mussolini has succeeded in preserving the unity of the party, with the result that the inner cleavage has not been reflected in the government's policy. It is as yet too early to say whether, in the absence of Mussolini, Fascism could be maintained indefinitely in its present form.

88. "The *Alleanza Nazionale*" (Paris, Imprimerie Vendôme, 1931). Nine bulletins were published by the *Alleanza Nazionale* between June 1 and November 1, 1930, when its members were arrested by the police.

89. For the account of the trial, cf. *Corriere della Sera*, December 23, 1930.

ANTI-FASCIST ACTIVITIES ABROAD

The anti-Fascist irreconcilables have for the most part transferred their activities abroad, and have established their headquarters in Brussels and Paris. The émigrés are divided into three main schools of political thought—Communists, Democratic Republicans and Democratic Monarchists. The Communists, rather numerous among the workers, have a widespread press which, according to their opponents among the émigrés, is subsidized by the Soviet government and by Italian agents provocateurs. The majority of the bourgeois émigrés are Democratic Republicans, but are further split into Right and Left Wing Socialists and Republicans. The Right Wing Socialists and Republicans form the so-called Anti-Fascist Concentration (*Concentrazione Antifascista*), which publishes a weekly newspaper *Libertà*, and a fortnightly bulletin, *Italia*, both in Paris. In addition, the Concentration publishes a satirical paper, *Becco Giallo* (Yellow Beak), printed on very thin paper and smuggled every fortnight into Italy at the rate of some 7,500 copies. The leaders of the Concentration are Professor Gaetano Salvemini and the Socialist Filippo Turati, editor of *Italia*. Finally, the Democratic Monarchists, including Count Carlo Sforza, former Minister of Foreign Affairs, and ex-Premier Nitti, favor retention of the House of Savoy; in all other respects, they appear to agree, and actually collaborate, with the Democratic Republicans. The Fascist government professes nothing but contempt for the émigrés. On March 3, 1931 Arpinati, Under-Secretary of the Interior, described them as "people who make politics their profession, and who live on anti-Fascism as they once lived on subversive doctrines, people who have lost all notion of time and all sense of reality."⁹⁰

SUMMARY

The émigrés charge the Fascists with the suppression of parliamentary government at a time when the latter not only had shown no signs of decadence, but was susceptible of further successful development. The Fascist government, they claim, has completely destroyed the spirit of the Italian constitution, while preserving a semblance of legal-

ity. The restrictions placed by Fascism on individual liberty, they argue, may have had some justification during a transitional period of political readjustment; thereafter, however, the government should have returned to normalcy—that is, apparently, restored the conditions which it set out to remove. The émigrés agree that such "normalization" would involve the disappearance of Fascism, but believe that this eventuality would redound to the benefit of the country. The anti-Fascists contend that at the present time the country's economic development is hampered by the control exercised by the state over production. They believe that, if order has been restored, it has only been at the expense of individual liberty, and that the government has failed signally to solve the country's economic problems. Finally, they assert that the government has pursued an aggressive foreign policy which has irreparably injured Italy's prestige and credit abroad.

The Fascists, for their part, claim that parliamentary government was not an indigenous product, had never taken root in Italy, and had become completely impotent during the post-war years. They believe that a highly centralized government is alone capable of regulating the economic life of a country like Italy, poor in natural resources, and of insuring a just distribution of material goods among a rapidly growing population. The Fascists do not deny the suppression of individual liberty, but contend that they have introduced higher ethical values into Italian life by imposing on all groups of the population a discipline dictated by national, as contrasted with personal, interests. They assert that, as a result of this discipline, the Italian people have applied themselves with a new energy to the task of production, and that Italy's prestige among nations has thereby been restored and enhanced. Finally, they claim that the government, having re-established internal peace and order, has effected a series of important reforms directed at the development of the country's resources. These reforms, undertaken in the fields of finance, agriculture, industry, education and social insurance, will be discussed in a subsequent report.

90. *Il Giornale d'Italia*, March 4, 1931.

